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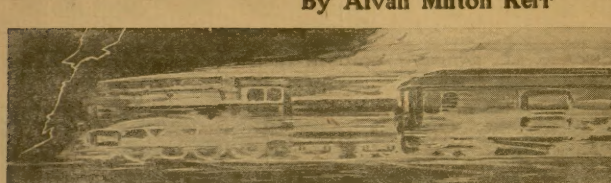
The President's Son

By Alvah Milton Kerr



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PRESIDENT SANBORN of the Western Central believed in merit and experience in lieu of the influences of birth, wealth, and "pull." The sons of directors and rich stockholders found his doctrine uncomfortable, so did his namesake, Clark. When the latter came home to Denver from an Eastern school, and stated that he had made up his mind to make railroading his life work, the president said:

"Your choice pleases me. I suppose you have in mind ultimately to occupy a seat at or very near the top?"

"Certainly; nothing less," Clark replied.

"Then you will have to begin at the bottom of the class and spell them all down, one by one. On the Central there is no other way."

The young man looked about him, at the mahogany furniture of his father's private office, at the expensive rug beneath his feet, at his sire's sturdy, well-rounded figure, then he said, "I'll sit down, I infer," he remarked, a glint of banter in his gray eyes.

"Most of them," the president said, smiling. "Not on the Central, however. I was thirty years on the way, most of the time working for other roads, in nearly every department from section foreman up to this desk. How could I wisely pass on the work of others had I never done such work?"

Clark reflected a moment. "Where would you advise me to begin?" he asked.

"I would suggest that you go out on the road to Paley Fork, for instance; become a member of a section gang; learn those men long enough, at least, to learn exactly how a railroad track is kept in order. Then you ought to go into the roundhouse and repair shops out there, and find out in a practical way about the construction of cars and engines, then you had better fire an engine for a while. By doing so you will learn to run a locomotive and what sort of obstacles trainmen have to contend with. After that, if you are not discharged for laziness or lack of competency, you can take up something else."

A slow flush of something akin to anger crept across the son's handsome face. About him in the big modern building lay many of the offices of the treasurer's department, the offices of the land department, the chief engineer's quarters, the richly appointed suite for the directors, yet he must go out and dig dirt under the hot sun, handle oily machinery in the shops, and, finally, pound coal and shovel it into the fire-box! Firing a locomotive, he knew, was fearfully bodily toil. In truth, year by year the size and power of locomotives had been augmented until firemen alone could be found possessed of muscle and endurance sufficient to keep them in steam. To Clark it looked like a course of hard, humiliating.

"Pater," he said after a moment, "you have been mighty good to me in the east, and I appreciate it, but, really, don't you think you are rubbing it into me now?"

"No. You may not understand it now, but you will if you ever become a railroad official."

"I suppose you are right; anything that is really big and of consequence has to be struggled for, I fancy."

"Exactly so, and in the struggle one also grows big and of consequence; otherwise one couldn't capture and hold down the big thing when one got to it."

Clark laughed. "Well, then," he said, "I think I understand why you are president of the Central. I'll wade in; I don't believe you will hang out tamping ties and shoveling coal longer than seems necessary."

The president's strong face softened tenderly. "No; it would please certain feelings of mine to make life altogether easy for you, but it won't do; you have got to meet the tough things and master them. I will give you a note to Roadmaster Logan. Go out with him; he will put you on somewhere. You will draw regular wages. No money will come to you from home; college days and college luxuries are over for you, understand. You will draw from one-fifty to two dollars per day. Earn it and live on it; that will enlighten you about certain things that may be valuable to you in the future. The matter rests with you to win or lose. I don't expect to see you show the white feather."

The tall boy's teeth clinched and the color in his cheeks deepened, but he shook his father's hand and said, "All right, dad," and went out.

The next morning Clark went over the range to Paley Fork with Logan, and the following day was made a member of a section crew on the Middle Division. To the college-bred youth it seemed a lowly position indeed. His hands lost their whiteness, and, passing the stage of blisters, became calloused; the milky scarf-skin peeled from his face in the sun's glare and his flesh grew swarthy. But he found out how the whole road track in order; there no man would ever be able to deceive him. At the end of five months he was given attention to the work-train on the West End, and began education in fills and excavations, bridges, earth-trestles, and how wrecks were swiftly cleared from the track. During the winter he went out on the snow-plow battery of four engines and a rotary and had experience of what it is to run on the sky-grades. Early spring found him in the shops at Paley Fork, garbed in overalls and working among swinging cranes, snarling lathes and the crash of steam-hammers. November found him on a side-shift in the roundhouse, dumping engine-grates over ash-pits, filling sand-boxes, and polishing the brass. By June of the following spring he was hostler, bringing out engines to the main track for departing trains and taking engines into the house from arriving trains.

Naturally the story of the "nerve" of the president's son went the length of the Central's lines, but, strangely enough, there was a curious reticence. Not once did President Sanborn urge the boy to come home to the luxurious office in the house on Capitol Hill. "Whenever you are tired of the fight, you will be welcome home," was the sum and substance he ended most of his letters to Clark, who was wont to rejoin with something like: "Your invitation sounds good, but I'm not at present trotting with the silk stockings; too busy." Once at the end of a note to his father he added a line which read: "P. S. You haven't noticed any white feathers yet, have you?" But he had the courage and decency to strike that out.

In August of the second year he informed Master Mechanic Addicks that he would like a job of firing. The M. M. looked at the youthful applicant slowly; pass it up. The work is back-breaking, racking, infernal," he said. "You are not going to allow your son to be an engineer. I know your father too well for that."

"The pater said fire and fire it will be. I'm not going to sprout any white feathers at this stage of the game," was the grim reply.

The M. M. looked at the young fellow admiringly. "The old block and the chip are of a piece, that's plain. But it looks like nonsense to me. I'll let you know about it soon," he said.

At that time telegrams and letters of an open-hearing character were passing between postal authorities and railroad officials, dated from Washington, D. C., Chicago, Denver, and Los Angeles. The thing in ferment was whether or not a certain volume of mail could be given quicker transit between Southern California points and the cities of the East by way of the Western Central than by means of the longer route thru the plains country to the southward. From Manzano, a point on a transcontinental line in eastern Arizona, across the mountains northeastward to Denver, three hundred miles of mountain road was against five hundred on "the southern track," that was the proposition. Six hours from Manzano to Denver would nail the contract. Fifty miles an hour and mountains galore! It had a daunting look. All along the line the tone of comment was pessimistic. Still, when Sanborn and Superintendent Burke and Chief Dispatcher Maxwell had drawn the schedule for the flyers, every man on the Central felt his blood quicken and his pulse hasten, and that someone was to be admitted, the line must win.

On the eighteenth of August everything was ready for the test. Out thru the Hall Bridge and Chasm Gap, 1,174 m. on, the test was set. The whole line resembled a chain fast with excitement. Train orders flashed to and fro on the wires, keeping the track clear for the racer; every man on the Central, metaphorically, held his watch on the flyer, mentally "pulling for her."

Up the long valley of the Big Bear Paw the 1499 thundered, whirled across Hall Bridge and chased the echoes up the winding canyon of the Little Bear Paw, and onward over the Saddle Bow Range and down into Peace Valley. There, at Three Flames, engine 1010 was waiting, and being transferred to the train, rushed onward, twenty-two minutes late. Thru Peace Valley, whistling for Hangman's Gulch and Gimlet Horseshoe and up over the Misley Pass, roaring thru twenty-eight miles of snow-sheds, the 1010 ran.

Onward she flew, snapping the mail-cars around the curves and downward grades, and with a long, howling sweep in thru the switches at Paley Fork, but, alas, thirty-eight minutes behind the scheduled! Half time-allotment on the division station was on the depot platform, among them Superintendent Burke and Chief Maxwell. The engineer and fireman of the 1010 descended to the platform grimy and staggering with weariness. The they knew it, within friends, sixteen minutes had been added to the time lost by the 1300 on the West End.

The 1010 was instantly cut loose and sent to the house, and a big Baldwin engine, the 1206, backed down and snapped fast to the mail-cars. Dick Munson, engineer, gave no knowledge of fear, sat at the throttle on the fuel-deck, with hat off and sleeves rolled to the shoulders, stood Dan Madden, one of the Central's crack firemen, on the fireman's seat, with his hand on the bell-rope, and Clark Sanborn. The M. M. had said to him that morning:

"When you bring the 1206 out today you better stay on her and make the trip to Denver. I want you to watch you know what it is to run her."

Dan Madden work. Maybe when you've seen what a passenger mogul really is you'll be satisfied to pass up the job. Besides, Madden may need help."

Clark laughingly assented. "All right, Mr. Addicks," he said. "I think I'll enjoy the ride. I wouldn't object to getting a glimpse of my good gray dad provided I don't have to go to Denver in a Pullman and wearing a biled shirt."

Addicks patted him on the shoulder and growled good-naturedly: "Don't worry, boy, you will have dust and grease enough on you this trip before you hit headquarters."

To Clark nothing particularly new was promised by the trip, save that a fight against time was to be made over something more than a hundred miles, half of which was mountains. The gauge of the 1206 showed a steam pressure of nearly two hundred pounds to the square inch, and a blue-white plume jetted from her safety exhaust as the last coupling was made. Panting for the race, she stood a beautiful monster, one hundred and eighty thousand pounds of tested steel, with a tender attached to her that held six thousand gallons of water and ten tons of coal. Maxwell and Burke and Addicks drew quickly off hand by hand, the face of each man grave with anxiety. Munson saw their lips moving, but could not hear what they said. He nodded good-by, but Clark heard and shouted across to him:

"They say, 'Give her the whip, go into Denver on schedule if possible, but look out that she don't get away from you on the hard stuff down the Divide.'"

Munson's gaunt face lit up with a smile; he touched the sand lever and the 1206 began to move. Like lightning the fiery gas straining in the engine's boiler shot thru her throat into the cylinders and the 1206 leaped forward in a roar. Back in the mail-cars Conductor Dirken and the clerks were all but thrown from their seats as the speed increased. It seemed that the drawheads might be jerked from their sockets, but the next moment the 1206 was running out on the main track in a clamor as of many shattering things. Clark, looking back from the fireman's window, waved his cap to the crowd on the platform. Munson never looked back, but Dan Madden shouted something like gray from.

Then the 1206 was a streak down a valley and around the base of Silver Mountain before encountering the Sandhill Range and Gimlet Range. Here were some thirty miles of slightly falling track are the towering barrier of the Sandhill Range began to rise. Before and beyond the Range time must be made. Munson centered his attention on the engine, and Clark saw that her a little shorter stroke and a little more steam with each thousand feet traversed and was nearly exhausting into a solid roar. With the flight of four or five minutes they were cutting thru the air at a sixty-mile rate, and in ten minutes the speed had increased to seventy, at least. The three cars of mail seemed no more than dancing ballast for the hurling mass of steel at the front. Majestically she rolled on her appointed way, Munson her calm, guiding vortex of shadowy things. By times her Crosby chime-whistles sent out a shrieking warning, and then she was off were calling triumphantly to mountains and tempests and earth's grandest emblematic heights.

Down on the fuel-deck Madden swayed back and forth between the coal pile and the fire-door, stoking. Every shovel was trickling down the fireman's sinewy neck. From the window-seat Clark looked down on the straining fireman. It was glorious to sit there at ease, hearing the wind scream in one's ears and feeling the engine shaken by the grip by the flying engine, but to get down in front of the hot boiler-head and toil as the old Addicks' appreciation of the task would exact. But how about one's duty? And how about the white feather? Clark set his teeth grimly, remembering what the "old man" had said. It was well for the first flyer of the Central's Fast Mail that Purpose in the young fellow's breast remained as granite, for even while he was weighing the question a momentous thing happened. Madden struck the block into a block of coal and there burst out a flash of flame and a crash of sound. The fireman bounded back against the boiler-head and fell in a quivering heap, something like a knife ripped across the back of Clark's coat, and then he leaped forward with a cry, the glass of both cab-windows burst outward and the place was wreathed in blinding dust.

Something in the block of coal, doubtless a bit of giant powder, had been pierced and ignited by the point of the iron pick. Such explosions have occurred before, sometimes in the furnace of an engine, bringing dire results. With the crash of the explosion Clark leaped down on the fuel-deck, both hands at

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the back of his neck, his face awry with pain. The next moment he caught Madden in his arms and lifted him, terror in his eyes.

"Dan!" he cried, "Dan—are you hurt? How bad is it?"

The fireman groped about with his hands, gasping and struggling. Munson writhed backward, twisting his body until his face was turned toward a ring of pallor shone about the engineer's drawn lips and his eyes looked glassy and strange. He was feeling blindly for the throttle-lever. Madden reached a hand toward him, his fingers working, his features distorted in fierce protest.

"Don't shut her off, Dick," he shouted, "don't—don't reverse her! We will lose time! I'll be all right in a minute—I—just a—minute!" He tried to get to his feet, but one of his legs doubled under him like a limb of putty. "My right leg—it's broke!" he gasped, looking fearfully into Clark's face as he clung about the young fellow's shoulders.

As they held together, swaying with the dip and roll of the rushing engine, Clark spoke near the fireman's ear: "I'm hurt, too, Dan, but not bad; just a scratch, I think. I'll do the firing; I'll try my best to keep her hot. We will have to stop and get you into one of the mail-cars so you can lie down. It won't do for you to stay in here."

Munson was staring at them. Suddenly his eyes cleared. "What is it—what happened?" he shouted.

Clark swayed toward him, clinching Madden's body about the waist. "Explosion in the coal," he shouted in explosion in the coal," he shouted in reply turn. "Dan's got a broken leg. I'll fire her now."

Munson threw on the air, clanged the reverse over and twisted himself painfully from his seat. "Something knocked the breath and sense out of me," he said, "but I guess I'm all right." He scanned Clark's face hesitatingly, "Do you think you can keep her hot?" he asked.

"Certainly," said the big youth, angrily. "If you can keep her open and she stays on the rails we will go in on schedule. If necessary, wedge the safety. We must win this fight." Something that had made his father president of the road was speaking in the boy.

"Good," said Munson. "For a minute I thought sure we was whipped." As with men in battle, each thought first of the outcome of the struggle. Munson took hold of Madden. "Let him lie down," he said to Clark. As they eased the fireman to a recumbent position his lips twitched.

"I could do it, Dick, I could do it if I could stand," he wailed, and again, "I could do it if I could stand, Dick, I could do it if I could only stand up."

"We will make it or blow her up, Dan, don't you fret," said Munson.

Five minutes later Madden was lying on a bed of empty mail-sacks in one of the cars, and the men were doing all they could for him.

"Pile the sacks on each side of him so he won't roll," said Munson. "We will get you to a doctor, Dan, as fast as the wheels can turn. Hold fast, you fellows in there, when we go down the east side, there's going to be doings. Come on, son."

Clark and the engineer rushed back to the 1206 and climbed into the cab. Munson, the his features looked pinched as with pain, flung himself upon his seat, threw the reverse back and pushed the throttle open. The 1206 belched out her stench in clouds and started off like a race-horse. Clark flung his cap upon the fireman's seat, pulled off his shirt and threw it in a corner by the boiler-head. Stripped to the waist, he turned to the mail-car interval. Here was transmitted down among the white muscles of his back. He pulled the furnace door open and took a shovel-load from the coal upon the seething bed of fire within. Two hundred and seventy-five tubes of fifteen feet length let in the heater before him, two thousand square feet of surface to be heated. The big fire-box, breathed with the fierce draught, roared hoarsely as it devoured the coal; each time the door swung open a scorching blast of heat smote him. Soon the president's son began to breathe with his lips parted, ere long his body was beaded with sweat, then it became a wet mat and his skin streaked and grimy with dust. Half his strength went in a continuous effort to keep on his feet. He began to realize what it meant to labor while standing upon a swaying, lurching surface, a floor that never remained level, constantly shifting; to feel himself burning with heat and his brain and nerves shaken into giddiness by the never-ceasing roar of the floor and the clangor and shock of things about him.

They went around the long, curving base of Silver Mountain in a cloud of rushing echoes. Notch by notch Munson was opening the throttle, measuring the to his waist ran a dark embroidery of blood-soaked dirt. By times he shook the grate-lever to give her better draught, again he plunged the stirring-rod into the furnace, but for the most part he simply pounded coal furiously and sprayed it thru a red-white hole that belched blinding heat into his eyes.

Halfway up the Range, Munson slipped down to the fuel-deck. The dial showed heat of the boiler-head, then stared ahead.

Down around Puma Point they swept, passed the Queen Cove mines like a flash and struck the shore of the Sandrill. On the sharp curves Clark sometimes lunged clear across the cab, and back in the rocking mail-cars men grasped whatever stable thing they could lay hold of to keep themselves upon their feet. A half-mile down the Sandrill the 1206 literally leaped upon the bridge and tore across in a torrent of noise, then they were rushing up the winding groove that led toward the summit, twenty miles away. At Bridge Station the conductor threw a book from the tail of the train. In the book was a message which read:

"President Sanborn, Denver: Madden's leg broken; your son in firing; gaining on the schedule.
DIRKEN."

When the president had read the telegram an anxious, tender expression softened his face. He felt a twinge of uneasiness from the thought that Dick Munson was at the throttle. To what extreme Munson might carry the speed on such an occasion as this was a disquieting surmise.

"He ought to have had a secondary engine to help him up the western side of the Range," thought the president. "If we get the contract that must be looked after. I'll wire Burke about it."

Far over on the western side of the Cradle Range such the same thing was being said by Dick Munson, save that the words were edged with sulphur. Thru several miles of the beginning of the long climb, the 1206 swept along the iron trail at high speed, superb, scorning the backward push of the grades, then almost imperceptibly the glimmering whirl of the drivers slackened, their breathing grew louder and finger-drawn, her gait fell from sixty to fifty, from fifty to forty, from forty to thirty. Clark fought like a demon to hold her there, but gradually she slipped down to twenty-five, she got as low as that. To and fro she wove her way toward the summit, swerving across a slope here, wheeling along the verge of an abyss there, sending over dizzy trestles, plunging thru stifling tunnels, always upward. Clark's face and body turned to a mask of sweat and oil and dust, across the nape of his neck the flesh lay open, down his back

"I'm hurt, son, I'm hurt inside!"

one-seventy to the square inch, he wanted to push the pressure to the two hundred mark. He clung at the side of the cab, looking at Clark for a moment. The engineer's gaunt face was drawn with suffering, his eyes glistened with pain and rage.

"Here's where we lose, here's where we get whipped!" he cried, hoarsely. "Why didn't the idiots give us a helper up the Range? They're so-called imbeciles!"

Munson steadied himself and from under a tangle of wet hair glared at him redeyed and panting. "Shut up!" he shouted, furiously, "we're not whipped! When we make the summit let her fall to the plains, let her drop, don't hold her, I tell you! We are going to make connection with the Eastern Fast Mail at Denver, we are going in on schedule! Get out of my way and let me work!"

Munson's long arm reached out and his grimy fingers closed like talons upon the young fellow's slippery shoulders. Their hot, straining faces were close together. "Don't order me, you young lobster! No matter whose son you are, you don't you——" The engineer's jaw snapped shut and his face wrinkled in agony. He would have fallen, only that Clark gripped him about the body and held him up. "I'm hurt, son, I'm hurt inside," muttered Munson. "Help me up to the seat. I think I can handle the levers till we get in."

A flash of tenderness swept across Clark's distorted face. "Lie down here somewhere, Dick," he said. "Put the cushions on the floor. Let her run, I'll look at the levers now and then."

"No; help me up to the seat. Dead or alive, I'll ride her till she goes under the last semaphore," said Munson. He crawled up with Clark's aid and straightened his long legs to the footboard. As he did so he noticed Clark's bloody back. "Why, son, what is it? What hurt you?" he asked with strong concern.

"From the explosion—something hit me—broke it, I guess," was the answer. As the young fellow with fresh fury buckled to his task.

"Now, you stiffen and keep her, I'll be back," came Munson's voice from above him. Clark gave the words no heed until they were followed by the sound of the summit. As the altitude increased the noise of the engine seemed to him to increase until sounds rattled and boomed on his eardrums like musketry, bands of iron seemed drawing together about his chest and head. Struggling for breath, he turned a tank-cock and let a pail fill with water, then dashed the cold fluid in a deluge over his head and body; then he again fell to work.

As they crossed the summit and the big drivers began to quicken their revolutions, Clark hung for a few moments out the cab window, gasping and dizzy. Away to the eastward and far below them spread an immeasurable plain. Mottled with green and gray and dotted with herds of cattle, minute with distance as insect larvae, the mighty apron of earth swept eastward, meeting on the horizon a dim wall of slate-colored clouds. Overhead the sky was watery green; the August sun glared hotly, the air seemed motionless. Fifty-five miles still to Denver!

They went down thru twenty miles at a speed which Munson shut off steam, but refused to use the brakes, and engine and train flooded toward the plain, shaking, swaying, lurching and forth across slopes, around beetling crags of stone, across chasms and down canons, then reverse. The more and more reverse curves that hurled Clark from one side of the cab to the other, coat, shirt, out from the cab to the fuel-deck and danced under his feet, the quadrant and reversing lever strained and wrenched in his grip, the tank threatened to tear up the flooring. Munson, shaken and pounded by the jerk and roll of the engine, crumpled forward into a kind of knot, his hand on the throttle, his features seamed and drawn, his eyes aglow with defiance and pain. Clark, spent by labor at the high altitude, staggered and clung to whatever was handy, but kept on feeding the furnace. Slowly the needle on the dial trembled toward the two hundred mark, a shrill note of steam sang from the safety on top of the boiler. When they would strike the plain, then he wanted her to be fairly bursting with power.

Down thru Quarts Cone and East Gulch they hurled, and still onward, rushing thru Barn Butte, near the foot of the Range, in shattering fury. From every catspaw office thru they passed the time was flashed to Paley Fork and Denver. They still were behind the schedule, but were gaining. Now and then Munson threw on the air, wringing sparks from the wheels in spirting showers, for at points the danger of leaving the track was too imminent to be ignored.

As they flew along the groove toward the plain, Clark saw nothing of clouds or sun or sky, being intent upon the steam-gauge and the fire-box and the baffling problem of keeping upon his feet. But Munson, when they were two shirds way down the Range, became aware that in the east there was rising a mountain of vapor, green, craggy, portentous, immense. He saw that the towering crag was abutted by a mighty wave of vapor, stretching north and south beyond the capacity of the human eye to compass it. He had never before seen in that latitude the heavens written with so large a prophecy of havoc. The impressed with the vision and dismayed by the thought that the terrific tornado might impede or entirely block the way to Denver, he conceived of nothing very clearly. Stunned and gripped by inward agony, he felt at times his senses lapsing. One impression, however, remained distinct and pricking into his brain like a thorn of fire. When they would enter the plain he must force the cut-off and throttle for still greater speed and outrun the approaching tempest.

They rang down from the foot-hills on to the level at a killing pace, with each man on the train clinging to something to keep himself upright all save poor Madden, who, buttressed solidly by heavy bags of mail, ground his teeth in pain one moment and laughed the next.

"Dick's getting her there!" he would cry. "Feel him pound her! Feel him pound her, Dick! That boy's a boy, sure he's getting the hash into her! We are going some, Dirken, sure we're only hitting the high places. Pound her, Dick, he'll jam her nose against the Denver bunting-post before the president's watch and the chronometer are checked!"

They went down into something like a vacuum, a hot, thin, motionless atmosphere, pervaded by a sense of unexpressible, a vast space from which the normal gauge had in great part lifted and toward which a storm of steam was rushing from the east. Swaying to and fro in the cab, Clark fought for breath, to catch at times and a sense of falling sweep over him. In such moments he dashed the water himself and bent again to the fight. They might have been seven or eight miles northeast of Paley Fork when Munson, whose attention had swayed sidewise and was lying with his face among the levers. With a fourth, fifth and sixth effort of his faculties, the young fellow sprang up to the engineer's seat. He caught Munson about the shoulders, shouting in his ear his face. Munson's eyes were closed, but his lips moved. Clark put his ear Clark's lips moved. Clark put his ear

"I'm all in, son—everything is black—let her go wide—pound the coal under her—we're whipped, we're whipped," were the broken sentences he heard.

Clark laid the man back on the cushion, then he saw rolling from the east the indescribable billow, the tumbling mountain of clouds at its center, a gray sky overhead and a world beneath that seemed coated with rust. Here was opposition indeed, if not actual destruction! All the elements of his psychical being seemed drunk with exhaustion, but at sight of this incalculable menace his, whole nature seemed suddenly on fire; in him burst an opposing tempest, a storm of mingled rage and pro-

test and terror and determination. What! had men of the Central fought moment by moment over three divisions, battled thru nearly three hundred miles to conquer this schedule, and now, within sight of the goal, were they to be blocked by the senseless elements? He saw the world-wide bosom of the storm threaded with lightning, arteries that ran fire instead of blood, but he heard no thunder save the roar of the hurling machine that bore him.

As he looked he saw, as something done by the strength and swiftness of the supernatural, the wings of the tempest break away on either side of the mountain of clouds, and the mountain itself whirl like a gigantic cylinder, its top spreading, wide against the sky and spinning dizzily. Then it seemed to be fifteen or twenty miles distant, but sweeping slightly to the northwest. After it on either hand the wings of the storm rushed, from time to time huge masses of vapor being sucked into the flying cylinder. The 1206 was racing northeastward. It looked that the cyclone might cross the Central's line four or eight miles of the city. If it crossed ahead of the train there might be no track left at the point of crossing, or, at least, ties might be dislodged and rails twisted, bringing wreck; if the train were caught in the very path of the tempest, the mail-cars, at least, might be thrown from the track, then what of the contract and how long would McMillan and Munson? A force that could fling houses about as a giant might throw paper boxes, mud-puddles and hitches thru solid ground and pulling trees up by the roots with the ease of a man pulling up grass-blades—such a human creature try conclusions with such forces?

A glimmer of all this, vision and question and answer, blazed thru the brain of the dripping young fellow who, swaying half-across Munson's body, looked up at the storm. Then he leaped back on the fuel-deck and pulled out a knife and cut loose the coal which should not stop him! He glanced at the quadrant, the reverse-was biting near the center; he looked at the throttle, it was set to the last nick; the needle of the gauge pointed to one-ninety-two. They must be doing a mile a minute, maybe more, he did not know. He flung the furnace door open and stirred the raging bed of fire in the box, added blocks of coal into nut-sizes and sprayed the flaming mass. He glanced towards the mouth converging from the storm from the eastward. He must get more speed, he must get more speed. Suddenly the safety-valve blew loudly. He looked at Munson, who rolled on the cushion, limp and pallid as a dead man, then he caught a chair that came from the box and clambered over the man's body and out upon the board. Clinging for his life, he dropped a stone from the into the safety-valve and scrambled back into the cab.

If the boiler gave way, let her, he would risk it! Stone-scheduled-controller-and wounded man in need of doctors! Was he going to let her power blow itself out there? Not he. Not he, not Clark Sanborn, who had been commanded not to sprout white feathers!

He feverishly battered more blocks of coal into fine fragments, then ripped the big oil-can from the supply box and threw it upon the heap and drove the pick thru the can. As the oil gushed over the coal he shoveled the mass into the roaring furnace, turning his eyes by times toward the fearful thing eastward. The gauge needle trembled across the two hundred mark and crept on up to two hundred and five. The 1206 was literally flying along the steel, she sped in a cloud of thunder, seemingly every atom of her aroar with vibrations.

Back on the mail-cars there were three hot boxes, each one flaming, but the chap on the fuel-deck did not look back: he was racing a cyclone, trying to outrun destruction, fighting to gal a dying engineer to a physician, and to save the reputation of the Central. He jerked long-pronged forks from their rack and flung it down on the coal and cut the can half in two with a blow of the engineer's adze, he smashed the seat-boxes of their waste and fed the inflammable stuff to the furnace, he nursed and stirred and coaxed the last ounce of radiation possible from the blinding mass in the fire-box, himself half-blind with salt sweat and pallid with heat. One thing, the track was clear for the Fast Mail. Here and there all along the way had been flagmen and linemen, standing securely on side-tracks; but the mountain of whirling gray chaos was the thing for them. It had to be outstripped and beaten.

Swiftly the forces approached each other, the vast pillar of cloud that extended from earth to heaven and the superb man-made thing speeding across the plain. Under the tread of the tempest and its bursting thunder the world jarred and shook, the whole atmosphere of the region buzzed as from the swarming of a billion invisible bees, the air was pricked with fragments of buildings, with fences, shade-trees, dust and the bodies of birds. The fate of all things was a russet-green. The 1206 seemed straining every fiber, the gauge-needle crept to two hundred and eight; surely she was making ninety miles an hour; maybe a hundred, no man would ever know. Clark saw her, felt her, fed her, working like a demon. They shot past stations that he did not see. Words leaped along the wire to President Sanborn and back to Paley Fork to Manvell and Burke:

"Fast mail in danger of cyclone; trying to outrun the storm; making fearful speed."

The whole Central in fancy was trembling and straining, Sanborn pacing the floor of the dispatchers' office in Paley Fork, Sanborn was down in the great train-room, hurrying, walking up and down the track, for once beside himself. But Clark did not know; he was going to do it, he was going to melt the heart of the 1206 and to get her last drop of power into the wheels. His face, black with coal-dust, streaked with sweat and blood, was set in lines of fierce fight. In moments he seemed to lose his sense of hearing, the thunder of the engine and the storm merged into one, as he were listening only to a thin stream of water gurgling down a pipe, then it all came back clamoring in awful dissonance.

Suddenly he was aware that a reeling monster hovering above him, jets of icy air hissed against his head and body, darting things stung him, there was a rush of wind, the body of the 1206 sang thru it like the hum of a bowstring. The next moment he was rushing thru a world of darkness and his breath seemed plucked clean out of his body, and the next he was in brawling sunlight, the storm behind it. It was he swung out the gangway and looked back. He saw box cars being hurled from a rolling mass of cloud, boxes crashing out upon the prairie. The whirling heart of the tempest had crossed the track ahead of the 1206, they had grazed the monster by a hair!

They were now in the north wing of the storm: rain gushed over them and a fierce wind from the south met the straight-flowing currents, beyond the crushing power of the elemental vortex. The 1206 was not checked, but the cold rain with her gauze at two hundred and ten. Clark looked at his watch. His hands shook as that he hastily held the timepiece. He did not know precisely how long it was, but he guessed that they were now not more than eight or ten minutes behind schedule. He looked at Munson, then swung over and pressed a hand above the man's heart; noted and felt that it was still in the engineer's bosom; that was all Clark could tell. He pushed the wet hair back from his head and looked at the steam-gauge. Should he take the wedge out of the safety? Not yet, not yet. The 1206 had been overdriven, she registered a supply but little above the danger-point. He set the injectors working, but there was no response: the supply in the tank was failing low. But surely five or seven minutes at the murderous pace would take them into the city.

There was peril at many points; the hot journal on the rear cars, the low water, the perilous pressure of steam in the boiler, the numerous switches thru which they must pass as they neared the city. But the tower-men must keep the track clear, that was not Clark's business, and so there was the 1206 had an open throttle and was speedily using steam, surely her boiler would hold. Lightning-flashes, showers sparks and flimings of reason, glimpsed across his consciousness as he worked. While the 1206 leaped and reeled, rolling and wind and rain, a gigantic and hurling bolt of force.

Trackmen and titsens and the men in the towers never before saw a train go by as did that one. Across trons and thru switches she battered in thunder and at a pace that seemed appalling. The it was raining, everywhere thruout the suburbs people were watching for the Central's first Fast Mail. They saw a train flying, the smoke from her engine's stack in long streaks, red sparks and flames flaring from hot boxes. In the edge of the city there were people who saw a brakeman, standing on the fuel-shed, the great drivers of the 1206 were reversed, the air went on and the brakes bit the wheels into wreaths of red. Pitching and straining as if its fabric might burst in pieces, the train seated into the train-shed. It looked for the moment to be on fire from end to end. Shuddering and loudly creaking, the train came to a standstill, the pilot of the 1206 crushed against the safety-post.

Black as a negro and streaked with blood, a young fellow with a shirt thrown around his shoulders staggered down from the gangway. People were swarming about him. He heard a voice yell:

"Only two minutes behind the schedule!" He heard another hoarser voice shouting, "Pull to! Transfer the mails! Get busy, men!" Then a strong-faced, gray-haired man pushed toward him, wonder and alarm and questionings in his eyes

"My poor boy!" the young fellow heard the man say husikly. He felt the man's arms about his body, but things were not very clear to the young fellow; the place seemed to swim around and be paved with gaping human faces.

"Don't mind me," the young fellow heard himself saying. "Pull the fire from the engine, or get water into her, quick! Get the seat there —unconscious thru the last thirty miles! Get—a—doctor!" Then he heard voices all about him, excited, strident, but these lapsed and dwindled into whispers, then he was listening to a thin stream of water gurgling down a pipe, then it was dark.

A week later Clark sat by the president's desk and heard that smiled, "We've got the contract for the mail at six hours and thirty minutes," he said. "With another engineer, you know, I think we can handle it all right."

"I suppose I'd best take Dan Madden's place," said Clark, drily, the corners of his mouth twitching.

"Young man, you will stay here at headquarters: I've got other things for you to do," said the president.

"Then I'll stay," he said. "You know, pater!"

"Drop it! As a fireman you are a graduate. Bring these time-cards over here; we will figure out the new schedule."

This story is from the pen of the author of two books of railroad stories that we heartily recommend to Ledger readers: there is one called "The Second Key, and the Railroad Heroes Who Won It." The other book is "Railroad Heroes of Wire and Rail." These books recount many thrilling and extraordinary acts of devotion by telegraph operators and train dispatchers and engineers and conductors. If you like to read exciting railroad stories you should send for both of these splendid books. They are beautifully bound and finely illustrated, and contain hundreds of pages of reading matter that will make you sit up and take notice. If you wish to make a birthday present of "Young Heroes of Wire and Rail" is $1.00, "The Diamond Key, and the Railroad Heroes Who Won It," $1.00. Address: The Railroad Publishers, 93 Federal street, Boston, Mass.

* * *

A SAD TALE.

"Burn it down!" insisted the woman with the jade face to her friend in the starfish-shaped hat who had just airily mentioned that she was about to have her flat redecorated, repapered, decorated and the floors done over. "Burn it down, quick, and then have that fiend who has butchered and proceed to plant radishes over the remains!" she continued. "Life will be so much easier and happier for you."

"Why," proceeded the haggard woman, "I was weak-minded enough to indulge in the idea recently that perhaps I always was tender-hearted and the decorator man threw a look into his eyes that looked starving at home and starving children and I succumbed. 'We'll start Monday,' said the decorator man, 'we'll work overtime and I promise you that we'll be all thru and out of the way by Saturday night.' Your husband won't know anything has happened by Sunday except that he has a lovely new home! Tira lira it!"

"I don't see the trouble," interrupted the woman in the starfish-shaped hat. "Why didn't you arrange to—"

"Oh, I did!" broke in the haggard one. "I arranged it just as those articles on efficiency in the magazines and magazines tell you to! I arranged that while we were living in peace and order downstairs they should do the upstairs living-room and part of the bedrooms! Then when the family, looking like the beautifully arranged models around the library table in the back page magazine 'ad,' removed itself to the fresh upstairs sittings-room they could do the other bedrooms and the front rooms downstairs, and after that the dining-room and kitchen! Then it would be no confusion and discomfort to the family.

"John is a fine man, but he never can comprehend why it isn't possible to housecleam and paper eight rooms in a day, having the house in perfect order before and after each night hours when he is home. So I wanted to spare his nerves as much as possible. Did they follow my schedule? Why, woman, I went out of the house for a couple of hours or so on the first day they were there, having packed away the upstairs sitting-room and three bedrooms for them to work in. And when I got back there wasn't a spot from attic to the coalbin in the basement with an unoccupied place where one could sit down.

"I don't know how they managed it in that short time. Every wall was stripped and everything else emptied. I beheld the hem of my hall gown sticking out from under a pile of dusty portieres atop the piano and a new case of canned goods from the kitchen pantry was upstairs in the bathroom with the umbrellas and my best table doilies, which had been on the top of the sideboard.

"The laundress was drinking herself to death on tea in the kitchen demanding to know how a hand working woman could work in a laundry filled with millions of pails and buckets of calcimine, paint, varnish remover, shellac and paste and a few dozen stepladders, to say nothing of a small lumber yard of planks! The answer was easy—she couldn't.

"When John came home at night he gave a low moan at the front door, and in his agitation dropped his hat into a bucket of calcimine. He waded ankle-deep thru the wall paper they had been scraping off, and every time he tried to sit down he couldn't because there was always a lamp or a picture or a vase in the chair he headed for. He leaped like a chamois over the parlor couch and landed in my pet Boston fern, and when he found the kitchen full of the library books he brilliantly suggested that we had better go around the corner to a restaurant.

"We had breakfast off the piano bench, and when John wanted a necktie the cook said he would find his ties in the jardiniere on the bread box, for she had seen one of the workmen carefully put them there. By the next night it was worse, because there was varnish and -enamel in unexpected spots and on every finally located article of furniture, such as your workbox, they had moved it somewhere else when you went back to it.

"Margery wore one patent leather and one plain shoe to school because she couldn't find a pair of varnish to her closet to get the mates.

"And then the varnish man got sick the next day and another man and the paperhanger sent word that his grandmother had died. And the paper store sent the wrong order and then kept coming home looking more and more pathetic, till finally one awful night he sank down in a heap of wall paper.

"They got thru just ten days after they had promised they would, and my cook told me she said her constitution wouldn't stand such an awful-looking house. I didn't blame her—I'd have left, too, if my job hadn't been for life. As it is, I don't think John ever will feel quite the same toward me again. I can tell by the way he's cutting down on—"

"I've no doubt that's all the gospel truth," agreed the woman in the starfish-shaped hat. "Just come on and help me pick out wall paper!"

* * *

Quite the Contrary.

She—You know, Mr. Jones, I thought you much older than you are."

He—"Oh, no; not a bit, I assure you."

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THE QUADROON'S HATE

Or, One Man's Folly

By Ella Martin

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CHAPTER IV.

AT THE CROSSROADS.

STRAIGHT thru the orange grove at the rear of the building Ila Hastings fled, on to what was to have been her bridal night, her blue veil flutter-ing in the flower-scented breeze. Ce-cil was waiting — waiting, Lord, whom she loved, and the world was well lost if she gained her heart's desire. Not one thought did she give to the man she was expected to wed that night. She was going to flee with her lover to the land of the broad prairies, and thus es-cape the fate of becoming an unloved, unloving wife.

Straight as a crow flies and swift as a fawn, Ila crossed the fields and mead-ows, running on until she came to the cluster of trees under which was marked the place where two roads crossed each other, known thruout the countryside as the Crossroads. There she paused and peered into the shadows. She could discern the outlines of a mo-tor car, but could not see whether one was occupied. But, of course, Cecil was there waiting for her. She did not doubt it for a moment.

She was obliged to slacken her pace for want of breath. There was no hurry —it was all so much like a bridal groom had not arrived when she left the house. To be sure, she might have missed him by coming across the fields. But by the time her flight was discov-ered she and Cecil would be far on their way to the West, and she did not fear pursuit.

She was near the spot now where Ce-cil's car was waiting, but a passing cloud obscured the moon at that moment and she could not make out the form of her lover. Yet she went forward bravely.

"Are you there, Cecil?" she called softly, the words sounding so clear on the night air that she started in fear if they had been spoken by another.

"It is I, Cecil," she said, speaking this time almost in a whisper, "I came at your request. You said you would be waiting, dear. Are you not there?"

But no answer came to her out of the silence of the night, no sound issued from the shadows. The confidence that had supported her up till now began to desert her. She feared that Cecil had failed her. His machine was there, a great black shadow among the lesser shadows around it. What had become of him, then? Oh, what could have hap-pened?

"He may have gone down the road a little way to meet me," she murmured, to quiet her fears. "He would not ex-pect me to come across lots. I will climb into the tonneau and rest a little, while I wait for him."

She crept nearer reluctantly, intuitive-ly feeling that all was not well—some shadow was about to envelop her! And just then the cloud passed from the face of the moon, and the scene in the place was bathed in the brilliance that only a Southern moon can shed. And then it was, as the shadows grew less dense because of the moonlight out in the open, that Ila beheld a huddled form in the driver's seat, and the worst of her fears had come true—something had hap-pened!

"Cecil!" she cried, and lifted the dark brown head, which hung limp in her arms. A white, set face with blood upon it met her frightened gaze. Her head grew dizzy and a numbness seized her whole body. She sank back upon the grass, her head in her hands, with low, piteous moans, and began rocking herself back and forth.

"Dead!" she moaned, over and over. "All is lost—the hope of all love! Cecil is dead!"

And there thus she crept away from the spot, forgetful of what she was leav-ing behind, not remembering wherefore she had come, but just realizing in a benumbed way that she had failed over-for her—that living in its truest, fullest sense was ended. She had no mind left to wrestle with. She was as to what had happened at the Crossroads.

Suddenly, at the rear entrance of the mansion, unconscious of with blood upon her hands. It was Electra, the mulatto girl who had been bribed to carry the note to her mistress, who found her there. Frightened now because of her own act in delivering the message, the girl had run to tell her master that the daughter who had es-caped the marriage he had planned to force upon her was back.

"To' de Lawd's sake!" she wailed, "marse will kill me shuah! I shuah cut out I done carried de paper to her what enticed her away. What am happened, anyway? I don't see no blood stain on her hands. I will wash it off an' pro-tect de chile, whatever she hab done. De marse will neber guess about de note."

She arose from her kneeling position beside her young mistress and crept stealthily around the corner of the great building and made her way to a bath-room where she found a towel and basin of water. She reached Ila's side again unobserved. The water was only slightly warm, but it served to bring out from the unconscious girl's hands she revived her. However, she only moaned and opened her eyes in wonderment as she asked no questions.

"To' am all right now, honey," Elec-tra comforted, misunderstanding her ques-comprehending stare. "Come, we will go to de house and to bed."

And so it was that Ila Hastings, hav-ing got back to the home from which she had fled, found herself, tho she scarcely realized it, back in the room where a few hours before had lain the obnoxious wedding gown, and was put to bed under the same mosquito-net on which it had lain. Soon she had fallen into a fitful slumber in which she mut-tered incoherent words and phrases.

Electra left her alone while she went to find and inform the girl's parents of what had happened, for as yet she was the only one cognizant of Ila's return. Ere this the marriage of Lola and Lloyd Charlston had been solemnized and the two had taken their departure.

At first Lola had protested when the substitution of herself for her sister was suggested, but believing her father had gained Lloyd's permission for the wed-ding to go on with an exchange of brides, she acquiesced. But her heart was heavy with foreboding. There was no joy in anticipation for her, no hope of unalloyed bliss with the man she loved—or had loved—so passionate-ly. For she was the second choice. She had taken her to save his pride from be-ing wounded. There could be no great joy in the possession of such a his must be. Would she ever forget that he had discarded her for her sister? His heart might turn toward her when he realized that she had sacrificed her pride to save his—to save him from being hu-miliated before the company. But, strangely enough, there was no joy in the anticipation of this, tho she was passive while her mother arranged the bridal veil and wreath of orange blos-soms on her bowed head.

The guests were assembled in the chapel, which had been built into the house at the time of its foundation by some ancestor of devotional tendencies. If the guests wondered why the lights were so dim they doubtless concluded it was because of the solemnity of the oc-casion.

When Lola, followed by the brides-maids, passed down the aisle on her father's arm and into the bridegroom at the altar, she was numb with fear. How sad and solemn the wedding march sounded! It seemed to her like a dirge. She felt like shrieking aloud in hysteri-cal rebellion. This union suddenly be-came repugnant to her. But she must go on with it—on to the bitter end! There was no other way now—no escape. It was too late!

Her hand was placed listlessly in that of the groom's, who scarcely glanced at her trembling form. She gave the an-swers mechanically. Not so the bride-groom: he looked the officiating minis-ter in the eyes and replied in a firm voice without hesitation. It was al-ready his, thought, as if he did not know the truth concerning the change of brides. Or was it because he desired to give the impression that he was as well pleased as the bride who stood beside him at the altar? She dreaded the moment when her identity should be revealed, she little dreamed that the groom was as ignorant of the change in brides as the wedding guests themselves—that her father had pur-posely duped him.

At length the time came when Lloyd Charlston was to salute his bride of a moment. The veil was lifted, and so was the face of Lola; and for an instant they gazed at each other in quick amazement that turned to slow com-prehension. Then he hid his sur-prise and anger under a mask of self-possession. He bent his dark head to-ward her, his eyes smiling, to take the first kiss from his wife's lips. But with sudden repulsion Lola drew back. Her face grew pale, and the changing countenance to his immaculate attire immaculate but for a tiny crimson stain, a spot of blood about the size of a pea, but red and glaring, on the bosom of his shirt, and instinctively her face was set in a look of frozen horror!

CHAPTER V.

IN HER BRIDAL CHAMBER.

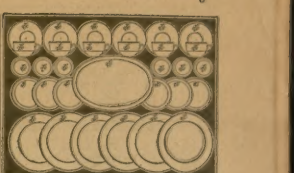
SHE was in her bridal chamber at Charlston Hall. She, Lola Charl-ston, now, the bride of a few hours. And the hope of it all was settling down upon her like a pall. This, the dream of her youthful heart, had come true only to turn into a horrible nightmare. She was awakening from the bewilder-ment which followed her discovery of the unspeakable, the poignant suffer-ing. Why did the tiny spot of blood, that no one else had noticed, intrude itself between her and everything else that happened after the fatal words were spoken that made her the wife of Lloyd Charlston?

She had not made a scene at the altar —not quite—but the suddenness of her discovery had made her start drawing back from the customary salute. Her action had been noticed, of course, marked by many curious eyes, and probably whispered about among the guests in her very presence. Lloyd had been hu-miliated, as well as she, but, too, by her self-control, and placing her hand upon the arm proffered her, she had walked in a daze down the aisle, the wedding march sounding like a death knell in her ears.

Then followed the banquet in the great dining-hall, and then the dance. But all thru the long evening she was asking of her heart the questions: Where was Ila, Lloyd's fiancee, since she had taken? What had happened at the Crossroads? And how came that blood-red stain upon the bosom of the bridegroom's shirt? What was the so-lution to her sudden feeling of revulsion when the dream of her heart had come true, and she was Lloyd Charlston's bride?

Her soul cried out within her for an answer to her fears. But the silence into which she sent her speechless cry enveloped her like a cloud. And the feast went on amid jest and wine and laughter.

And now it was all over and she was at the mansion of which she had that night become mistress. But Charlston Hall seemed more like a prison to her



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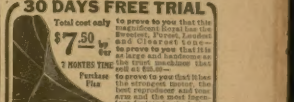

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than a home. For it was freedom she craved most, freedom was the desire of her heart, like that of a bird that is caged.

She had been introduced to the servants and shown to her apartment by one of them. Miss Charlston had not waited up to receive her nephew and his bride. Her age would excuse her from doing so, she had explained.

A light tap on the door interrupted her musings. She shuddered and shrank back, expecting Lloyd Charlston to enter. Oh, why had she not bolted the door? To her surprise the quadroon, Nepha, glided into the room as silently as a shadow and closed the door behind her.

Somehow Lois felt less afraid now. She glanced hurriedly around her, noting the spacious chamber furnished with all the luxury wealth could command, and felt more like an interloper than ever, for she knew this beauty and grandeur had been planned and wrought for another—her elder sister. She felt more keenly each succeeding moment the humiliation of her position, and saw in the quadroon a friend in need—a means of escape.

She glanced at the girl who stood awaiting her pleasure, and Lois vaguely murmured the words that were beating in her brain—the words that had begun to clamor for utterance the moment she had crossed the threshold of this room and the door had closed behind her, leaving her with a feeling that she was caged.

"Oh, save me!" she cried, in a subdued voice. "Save me from the consequences of my own folly."

The quadroon locked the door and fastened the window-curtains and then watched her wonderingly. It appeared that she, too, realized that there might be danger for her in the situation.

"I will help you," Nepha said. "You are not the bride. At least you are not—"

"Not the right one—not the one he expected to bring to this place," cut in Lois, too excited to realize that she was talking to a servant.

She had appealed to this young woman, and in desperate need. But she realized directly afterward how useless it was. There was the Hastings mystery to be cleared up. There must be no scandal. She made a strong effort at self-composure. She would lie in the bed she had made—rather allowed others to make for her—but she would occupy it alone. Lloyd Charlston, who had no love for her, should have no part in her life. She glanced again at Nepha, who stood regarding her strangely, with eyes that gleamed like coals of fire.

"Oh, what am I saying?" cried Lois. "Don't mind me at all. It is all so bewildering! I am not myself at midnight. I am tired! Oh, oh!" She sank into the nearest seat, a great easy chair, upholstered in dark-green velvet, and covered her face with her hands.

Nepha glided to her side. "I understand it all. You are not the one the master was to bring home, and he is not pleased. I saw in the dark eyes that I am here to save you. I would have saved your sister had it been she. I was supposed to be gone to bed, but I returned; it was his command. But to save the girl whom he entrapped from a fate worse than death, I hid him and remained. I intended to denounce him openly had he accompanied you to this chamber. But he will not come, now that it is you instead of the other. He loves neither, but would have married your sister for Cecil Lovel.

"I know him," she continued. "He is wrath, and must needs be alone to gain control of it. But he will return presently and will seek an interview. He will be insolent, sneering. And he will strive to humiliate you in every way his cruel nature can devise. You must forestall him. Insult him before he insults you! Send him a message demanding him the entrance here which he will never seek."

Lois sprang to her feet and faced the quadroon girl who was taking so much liberty and giving her such strange advice. Nepha divined her thoughts and slipped a folded paper into her hand.

"Read and then destroy," she said, no longer at my interference. He is a villain, as that paper will prove to you, and I am his Nemesis!"

Without replying Lois unfolded the document and took in its meaning instantly. Her quadroon friend read the paper as it fluttered from her grasp.

"You have seen!" cried Nepha. "You will have something to say!"

"Anything!" Lois moaned. "Go on—tell me what to do!"

"Send him here first, as he intends to humiliate you. He will never seek you here. Send him a note forbidding him to come. It will make him furious; but nothing now would induce you to remain at Charlston Hall."

"Nothing!" Lois echoed, the fire of indignation flashing from her dark eyes.

From the adjoining room the girl brought writing-materials and set before Lois, who wrote the following according to her dictation:

"Lloyd Charlston: We have, made a fatal mistake! I was not wholly my fault that I went thru the marriage ceremony with you tonight. I was unprepared—at the moment it was over I repented my folly. I realize at once that you were responsible for it. You counted fancied I loved you. How strange is that I could even have fancied it! Do not come near me. That is a command, that you do not cross the threshold of my private apartment. In disgust, LOIS HASTINGS."

She passed the note to Nepha, who rang for a servant and had it delivered at once. Meanwhile Lois paced up and down the room with clinched hands. *As Nepha came back to her side* she wheeled upon her with penetrating gaze.

"You are more his enemy than my friend," she said. "Tell me why you do this thing!"

A slow smile distorted the lips of the girl of quarter-blood. "You are right, Miss Hastings. It was not friendship for you that prompted me. I have a feeling to be your friend. I hate him principally for the wrong he has done another."

"Ah, I need a friend, and I want your friendship!" Lois cried, holding out her hands impulsively. "You have done much for me already."

"Yes, I have dared much, for if Lloyd knew I had purloined the paper from his desk he would kill me!"

The words brought to Lois' mind the crimson stains she had seen on the floor on Lloyd Charlston's otherwise spotless linen. "Is he so bad as that? Would he take human life and think nothing of it? Oh, I had an object in asking the question. She went closer and lowered her voice. "Tell me, is there a mystery attending murder?" She caught the other by the arm. "Ah, tell me!"

"Aye, I am capable even of murder!"

Lois fell back a step, then again grasped the girl's arm. "Come with me," she commanded. "Show me all of this house. I am going back to my home. Lead me out of the grounds and I can find my way. You will come with me and leave this place forever!"

Nepha regarded her calmly. "Are you afraid?" she asked.

"Not for myself; but I must learn what has happened at the Crossroads for I feel that it is well. To remain the spot so swiftly on our way here that we could see nothing. But—come!"

She paused as she remembered that she must not betray the fact that her sister had come to meet Cecil Lynd at the Crossroads. She placed her hand in the one Nepha held out to her, and the two women crossed the threshold of the daintily appointed bride's chamber and crept stealthily along the corridor. Suddenly the quadroon paused and drew Lois back.

"It is too late," she whispered, "to attempt escape now. The interview I told you Lloyd Charlston would seek in the morning must take place presently. He is already ascending the stairs. He is furious, as I feared he would be. He would be. Go back and face him when he enters your room. Fear nothing, for I shall be near you, and a bullet shall find his false heart rather than harm shall come to you. But be warned, and do not betray the fact that you have learned the truth. Tantalize him by showing indifference to what will cause him the most chagrin."

The next instant the girl was gone. And Lois saw that it was possible regained her chamber and locked herself in. She was afraid to meet him as Nepha had instructed, but bravely done so when Lloyd stepped from the dressing-room into the boudoir and confronted her. He had gained entrance by a door she knew nothing of. She started back in affright when she saw him, but suppressed the scream that rose to her lips. Only for an instant was she overcome by her surprise and dismay. Summoning all her courage and dignity she drew herself up proudly.

"You have disregarded my wishes—my commands," she said witheringly. "Are you not even a gentleman?"

"Be that as it may," he answered slowly, evenly, "at least I am master here."

"This is my private apartment, Mr. Charlston. Don't forget that I am mistress here. The late ceremony, however we may regret it, has given me equal rights in this house with yourself."

He placed one hand on the back of a chair, leaning heavily upon it, for his anger made him weak. Wrath faintly oozed from his lips.

"The late ceremony merely made you my wife and my plaything," he replied. "I will do as I will with my own."

The face of Lois Hastings went white to the lips. Was this what marriage meant—subordination? How little she had known of such men. She recovered her self-possession instantly.

"Never!" she cried vehemently. "Once I would have gone to you willingly. What it was that blinded me to your real character I do not know, I cannot even guess, certainly, it was not love. It is as if some hypnotic influence had fallen from me; for now I despise you even more than I ever regarded you."

An imprecation fell from his lips. "You impostor!" he cried; "you forced yourself upon me. You and your people plotted to bring the marriage about. Under the bridal veil and wreath of orange blossoms was your identity. And I, when I saw the trick, asked no questions, made no scene, for pride's sake, I was disgusted to come near you when I believed you expected and desired it. But now, by Heaven——"

Lois' soul quailed within her when she read the determination in his face. But for the fact that she believed the quadroon was within hearing, she would have fainted from excess of fright. She rallied with an effort and looked straight into the man's sneering face.

"Do you want to know what has become of the woman you expected to wed?" she asked. "The woman who has always despised you from childhood? I now do from a knowledge of what you are."

"I shall make it my business to find out what has become of her," he answered promptly. "And Ila Hastings shall become my bride. The law has freed me from the one her parents have forced upon me."

The girl's heart throbbed at the words, for a superhuman effort did she save herself from falling. She drew a deep breath, as her hands beat the air in an effort to overcome the dizziness that was overpowering her. There was a mist darkness at first, then blood-red spots. Presently the mist cleared and she found herself in a measure in possession of her senses again. But her eyes were fastened upon, and her scouring finger pointed to the stain on the crimson spot that stained the bosom of his shirt.

"It is blood," she cried—"blood! Ah, now I understand!"

CHAPTER VI.

LOIS RETURN.

IT WAS nearing dawn when Lois Hastings, with full knowledge that she had never been Lois Charlston, crept into the home light in the grove of orange trees, having taken a devious route thru the fields. So much had happened since she left Grape Place a few hours before that she had hardly recovered from her bewilderment. What would her mother say? What would she tell them in explanation of her return? Somehow she shrank from confronting that subject at once. She had never been a bride, that the marriage was a sham in more senses than one, in fact, that her supposed husband was a bigamist. The whole affair was so humiliating, now that she had time to reflect, that she thought of love and marriage were hateful to her.

She let herself into the house thru the back door, dreading to face the ordeal of explaining her presence there. Nepha had conducted her from the Charleston mansion to the grounds and till they were safely outside the gates. They then had parted company.

"We shall meet again," said Nepha, the quadroon girl, as Lois took her hand and tried to thank her. "But now I must leave you. I have other work to do. I must prove the legality of the document I carry in my bosom. Some day the rightful heir of Charlston shall come into his own. It is a prophecy—I, also, have work to do," returned Lois. "I must find what has become of my sister—and of Cecil Lovel."

The two once separated, each became

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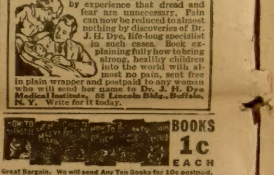
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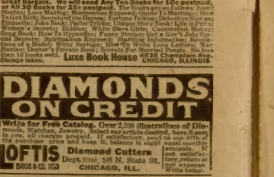
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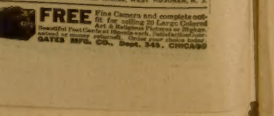

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engrossed in her own affairs. As for Lloyd Charlston, all either knew of him was that he had turned and quitted the room without one word or backward look, when Lois called his attention to the telltale spot upon his shirt-front. This action only increased Lois' suspicions of him as concerned in some affair of blood. And now she was more concerned than ever to discover if Cecil had indeed met her sister at the Crossroads.

There was nothing for her to do now but to face matters. And so she crept softly up the back stairs, down which Ila had passed in the early part of that very night. She found herself in the chamber where the bridal garments had lain so very recently, and she hurried thru it and on into the corridor. She heard voices issuing from the room where the bridesmaids had made merry so short a time before, and advanced stealthily toward the door. She was on the very threshold now, and that which she saw chilled the blood in her veins.

On the bed lay Ila Hastings, tossing about in wild delirium. A physician was bending over her, and at the foot of the bed her father and mother were standing, clinging to each other with frightened faces. Lois glided to the bedside and joined them. They beheld her instantly, but neither spoke; it seemed quite natural that she should be there. She had heard of her sister's condition, of course. Some one had carried the news to her. And so they did not wonder at her presence there, but reached out and drew her nearer to them. Thus all three stood in wonderment and anxiety, their eyes fixed on the sweet face among the pillows. Ila's cheeks were flushed, her eyes wide and shining.

Suddenly the doctor straightened up. "Brain fever," he announced, "brought on by a sudden shock to the nervous system. Listen!"

The lips of the sick girl were moving, and between her moanings words could be distinguished.

"He waited at the Crossroads, but he was dead. It was too late! It happened at the Crossroads. Oh, Cecil, my love——"

The voice trailed into silence, and the sufferer lay very still. The few sentences she had uttered had exhausted her.

"If the person she speaks of can be found," said the doctor, "it may save her life. Who is this Cecil Lynd—her lover?"

The father of the girl bowed his head in silence, and Lois shuddered, remembering that spot of blood upon the garment of Lloyd Charlston, so small, yet such damning evidence against him. As she listened to the babbling words from those feverish lips, her conscience cried out to her that she must bear witness against the man whom in her heart she believed guilty.

A nurse, who had just arrived in answer to the doctor's summons, at that moment entered the room, and the family was asked to retire.

"I can give you little hope unless the person she calls for be found," said the physician, as he closed the door after them. "Spare no pains, find him, if he be in the land of the living."

Again Lois shuddered, tho she knew nothing for a certainty, only experienced a prescience of what had happened at the Crossroads. Surely something was wrong, or else Ila would have been far away with her lover by this time. Something had happened to Ila even worse than that which had happened to herself when she discovered that, tho married, she was not a wife—that the man her parents had given her to already had a wife and child. How fortunate for her that she escaped at once—that she had learned the truth without delay.

And now the time had come that she must face her parents with the truth. She followed them into her mother's boudoir at the head of the staircase.

"Father," she began, purposely forestalling any questions as to her own affairs, "are you going to try to find Cecil Lynd?"

"There is nothing else to do, Lois. I must save my child's life at any sacrifice to my own feelings." He leaned wearily back in his chair. Lois noticed how haggard and aged he was looking.

"It has been a most eventful night," her mother said, suppressing a sob. "I wish, Brandon, we had never tried to give either of our daughters to Charlston. Scheming doesn't pay, and love should be given free rein. Matters would have adjusted themselves if we had waited and trusted to the future."

"It is a reproach," her husband cried, lifting his eyes, in which shone a look of deep regret, "and one which I well deserve! Clarice, hear me!" and he rose to his feet. "You know my hatred for any one bearing the name of Lynd—a hatred which is shared by the master of Charlston Hall. There has been a feud between the families of Lynd and Hastings for generations. I was beginning to outgrow the unreasoning prejudice I had inherited when Cecil Lynd went West. But afterward I learned that before he left he had won the heart of my motherless daughter, and the flame broke out anew."

"Motherless, Brandon? Do not say that! I have loved Ila as my own."

"No, not in the sense that you think I mean it, for you have shown no discrimination in the love and care you have given my daughters, tho only one of them is yours by birth. You are an ideal stepmother, Clarice."

"And Ila loves you, too," said Lois, sidling close to her mother. "She feels as papa does about it."

"Ay, yes; Ila appreciates the love and care I have given her," Mrs. Hastings replied, with moist eyes.

"And now," continued her husband, "everything is changed. I cannot overcome my deep-seated dislike—at least, not all at once. But for my daughter's sake I will leave no stone unturned until I have found her lover. I will move heaven and earth but what I will find him!"

He brought his fist down upon the marble-topped table beside which he stood with a vehemence that startled his wife and daughter. Mrs. Hastings sank into a seat, sobbing gently, overcome with feelings of relief; for she had always liked Cecil, and had thought the estrangement between the two families foolish and unnecessary.

Now was the time, Lois thought, to break the news of her own trouble to her parents. It would give them something to think of that would take their minds from Ila's condition for a space, tho it would only add to the blow that was already overwhelming. Anyway, it must be told, the ordeal could not be delayed much longer.

"Father," she said, taking his hand, "you are glad to have your girls back, are you not? You will keep us with you henceforth, and never try to place us in marriage again? Promise me."

Mr. Hastings stared at her blankly. His wife ceased sobbing and gazed at Lois wonderingly. Had she and Ila both lost their mind? What a terrible night it had been! The face of the mother went white because of the foreboding that entered her mind. There was more trouble in store for them; she ought to have seen it before. How happened it that Lois had returned almost immediately? No one from Hastings Place had carried her word of her sister's illness, she felt sure. There had been no time to think of it, even, and she had appeared at Ila's bedside alone—unaccompanied by her bridegroom. She rose to her feet, and bending toward Lois, gazed at her with questioning eyes.

"Explain yourself, Lois!" she cried. "In Heaven's name, what do you mean? Why are you here—and alone?"

Lois dropped her father's listless hand and turned to her mother. "There has more than one blight fallen upon the house of Hastings this night," she cried, tragically, "and both are shrouded in mystery. Ila fled from the husband you tried to force upon her, and behold what has happened to her! It is something we cannot fathom. And I—oh, you know how and why I went to the altar! It was done in a moment of weakness on my part, because I fancied I loved him, and because you both wished it. Now I wish I had died before I ever consented to become the wife of a man like Lloyd Charlston!"

Mr. Hastings stirred uneasily, but did not speak. Both waited for her to go on.

"My plight would have been worse than that of the sister who lies unconscious just across the corridor, had I not discovered that the man I married, or rather the man who went thru the marriage ceremony with me, was a villain before I spent the night beneath his roof."

"Lois, what are you saying?" gasped her father, while his wife waited with bated breath.

"Only the truth, father. Listen, and do not censure me for my actions. I saw the proof of his villainy in the hands of a servant, who had abstracted the document from his desk for a purpose of her own—to avenge her sister whom he had wronged."

"For Heaven's sake, Lois, come to the point," her father cried. "Who is this servant who dares so much? And of what nature is the proof you prattle of? And the crime? Of what sort of villainy do you accuse the man whom a few hours ago you swore to love, honor and obey?"

A dry, mirthless laugh left Lois' lips. "Ah, if I had really loved him, as I once believed I did, I should now be in

(Continued on Page 19.)

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HER STRANGE CONFESSION

Or, Making Good

By Constance Beatrice Willard

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CHAPTER XIX.

RICHARD KURSTON had been working too hard. That, added to the terrible strain of worry about his wife, was breaking down his splendid constitution, and just about the time that Rose was listening to Tommy he had started home, having been forced to give up for the day.

"I'm sorry!" he told Lincoln, who nodded.

"Take things a little easier, lad," he said sympathetically.

"I will for today," Dick replied, and then ordered a cab, for he did not feel equal to a struggle with the street cars.

The man was very pale and carried himself with a weariness that was not characteristic of him. When he reached his home he dragged himself into the house, and Rose, passing thru the hall, saw him.

"Why, dearest, what is it?" she asked. If he had not been so depressed he might have noticed her pallor, but as it was, he stretched out his arms to her, crying:

"Oh, Rosie, I want you! I'm just sick to see you!" and Rose understood. She knew the stress he was enduring, that he must be laboring under a terrible fear all the time that he might return and not find her.

"Come on in here and lie on the couch, and I will comfort you," she said gently, opening the library door. Just as she did so the telephone bell rang, and scarcely knowing what herself on the couch, where she was bending over him, when a servant entered saying that she was wanted on the 'phone.

Rose hurried into the telephone-room, then in a moment returned, her face drawn and her eyes worried.

"I must leave you for a little, dear," she said hurriedly. "I will not be gone any longer than I can help," and, then she left the room, and for the first time since he had become acquainted with her, Richard felt hurt at her apparent neglect.

He lay there, too tired to move, and probably fell into an uneasy sleep, for it was much later, already dusk, when he was awakened by his wife's breath on his face, by something wet, too, evidently tears. Instantly he sat up, and put his arm about her.

"What is it, dear? Tell me," he whispered.

"Oh, let me cry, Richard, let me cry!" she sobbed, and burying her face on his shoulder she sobbed as he had never known she could cry.

"What is it?" he asked tenderly, and then realizing that she was unstrung, he did nothing more, but let her grief have its way.

At last she gained control of herself, and she sat up, wiping her eyes.

"Dick, dear, I have something half for joy and half for sorrow," she confessed.

"Poor child!" he whispered.

"Oh, but you have had a terrible time, and I do love you for it! Your bravery, understanding and all the time of love on my part will in any way compensate, you will have it. No, don't say anything, but just remember I love you," and she laid her hand on his lips.

Before she could continue, however, a strange voice said, coming from the gloom:

"Excuse me, but I would like to speak to you, Mrs. Kurston."

Kurston's heart seemed to sink within him, for he recognized the voice, and knew it belonged to Detective Herrick. At that moment the room was flooded with light as the detective pressed the button.

"I am obliged to ask you to come with me, Mrs. Kurston," Prouty said.

"Why!" Richard cried, springing before her.

"I hold a warrant for her arrest," Prouty returned.

"Upon what charge?" Rose asked gently. She showed no fear.

"Murdering Stanton Herrick," was Prouty's quick reply.

Kurston flung his arm about her, but she freed herself from it.

"What's this?" another voice sounded from the doorway, and Mr. Vandeville came into the room.

"Now, don't any of you make any fuss," Prouty said in his most professional way, altho the man's own surprise his heart was riven by the reproachful look Kurston gave him. "If Mrs. Kurston will come with me, I can take her in the cab I have waiting without any more publicity."

"You accuse me of murdering Stanton Herrick?" Rose asked, speaking in her usual gentle way.

"Yes."

"Mr. Graves and Mrs. Livingstone furnished you with what seemed very good clews, did they not?" Rose asked, and the surprise the others felt was reflected on their faces.

"Yes, but there is no use of going into this matter now," Prouty answered coldly.

"I cannot understand why Lola Livingstone should have entertained any malice toward me, can you?" she asked her husband and child.

Vandevile shook his head, but thru all his misery Kurston flushed a dull red. He remembered how he had compused the woman, and his heart ached to think that any act of his should have brought any trouble to his wife, however innocent it was.

"Mrs. Kurston, I have no time to wait," Prouty rasped out.

"What do you want me to do?" Rose asked gently, and Dick was astonished to see the serene expression her face wore.

"Come with me at once."

"First, Mr. Prouty," she said quietly. "I want you to read this," and she took a paper from her dress and handed it to the detective.

As Prouty read, the look of amazement which swept over his face was something to see. He turned pale under the stress of his emotions, and then spoke so low and huskily that his words could scarcely be distinguished.

"You will let me take this with me?"

"To be sure. And now will you kindly go, Mr. Prouty? Both Mr. Kurston and I are very tired. Father, please see Mr. Prouty to the door."

"And you will forgive me, Mrs. Kurston?" Prouty stammered.

"You only did your duty, Mr. Prouty. No one can be blamed for that," then she and Dick watched the detective, escorted by Mr. Vandeville, out of the room. As soon as the door closed behind them, Rose turned, and throwing her arms about her husband's neck, sobbed frantically:

"Say you will forgive me, Dick, please? Say you do, darling."

"Forgive you what, darling? Anything I don't now know?"

CHAPTER XX.

YES, something else, and perhaps you will find it the hardest of all," she said faintly.

"What was that paper, Rose?" Kurston asked, speaking with authority.

"A confession from the real criminal," she returned.

"Then you did not kill the man?" he cried, seizing her hands and looking into her face.

"No."

The man staggered with the reaction of the relief. "But you said you were guilty," he said gently.

"I thought I was in a measure. Sit down, Dick, and let me tell you quietly and unpassionately, and then you can decide whether you can forgive me," and wondering, but so relieved he scarcely knew what he was doing, Kurston sat down at the table where he and his wife had spent so many happy hours reading and talking, while she sat opposite him.

"Stanton Herrick was a wicked man in many ways, and while he was walking along the street and his eyes fell upon a young girl, rarely beautiful, a fairly little thing, who had been only months in this country, ignorant of its customs, and speaking next to nothing of its language, he thought he would speak French. He was proficient in it, and the art of love-making, and it was not long before he won her little heart."

Rose paused a moment, pressing her hand to her heart, which ached her unspeakably.

"She believed him when he told her that their relations constituted a marriage here, and she was very happy until he grew tired of her. When he found that a baby was expected he deserted her, and she was found by one of our settlement workers, almost dying of starvation.

"It was then I first saw her, but she did not tell me her pitiful little story until the night she came to meet his death. I was very much excited over it, and rushed home to get father to do something.

"My maid, it appears, heard me telephone to Herrick. I did telephone him, for father was not at home, and I was carried away by my indignation. I had been so used to my settlement work, and to explaining to Garrahan at almost any time, that I did not stop to think that I should not go to his apartment at night. All I thought of was to plead with the man to marry the little thing."

Kurston reached across the table and grasped Rose's hand. To his surprise, tho, his wife avoided his eyes and continued hastily:

"I went there, and as soon as I began to talk with him I saw how useless my mission was, that he would never marry the girl he had ruined. Then I lost my temper and told him just how a villain he was, and in the estimation of any honest-minded person, I goaded him into a rage, and he fairly threw me out of the place."

Kurston half rose in his chair, and then remembering that the man had undoubtedly had all his crimes, sank back again.

"I rushed out, ran along until I found another taxi—I had dismissed the one I had come in—and reached home in time

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to find father and tell him about it. While we were talking it over, and he was scolding me for acting so rashly, the girl I had tried to befriend crept in. Her face and clothes were splashed with blood, her eyes were like those of a mad person. Then we heard of the crime. That little baby was coming, and we agreed, father and I, to shield her at least until after its birth. We quieted her and took her to the mission house, where she has since remained.

"She is a good Catholic, and went back to her faith after the crime. The priest had her make a full confession and had it properly attested, the day following. This paper she gave me with her dying hands this afternoon. It was this paper I handed to the detective. In it she says that she had stolen after me, and waited outside until I came out. She knew by my face that I had failed, and then she went in resolved to do her part. She had secreted a paper knife I had put in the reading-room on her person. Taking him at a disadvantage, the little thing easily killed him."

"Who was it, Rose?" Kurston asked gently.

"Little Tiny, the Polish girl," Rose returned.

"Is she dead?" he asked.

"Yes, and her baby with her. The telephone message this afternoon was from her."

"And did she plug up the keyhole?" Kurston asked.

"Yes, I believe so. I did not know that she had premeditated murder. What I thought was that I had enraged him so that he had maltreated her until he could let her to frenzy. I did not know that it was my own knife that had been used. Father would not take any action toward the discovery of the body, as he did not want to direct any attention toward us or toward Tiny."

"And what now, Rose? Have I to forgive, Rose?" Dick asked, leaning forward to look into his wife's eyes.

"The worst of all, Dick," she whispered.

"Tell me," he commanded.

"Dick, all my life I have been pursued by the fear that I would be loved only for my money—that is, until I met you. Then I knew I had met a man who could not be influenced by money. My father did not know, however. A woman knows when a man loves her, and I knew you loved me perhaps nearly as soon as you did yourself."

"Then you must have known it the first time we met," Kurston broke in.

Rose flushed prettily. "Perhaps I did," she confessed, but held up her hand to keep him from her. "Wait! I knew that you would have to be given some encouragement before you would consent to it, and I knew that father knew about it. I have always gone to Daddy with everything."

"About as good a person as you could find," was the quick answer.

"He kept saying that I must wait until you were proved worthy, and then this came up. When we came back from establishing Tiny at the Barracks, he told me the opportune time had come."

"Rose, what do you mean?" The man's voice was harsh.

"That I deliberately fooled you. I never have been in the slightest real danger. Tiny confessed before father, and was ready at any time to come forward with her story. It was a cruel, wicked plan of ours to prove that you really did love me, and that your love was worthy of the best in the world."

"You said you were guilty," he said in a low voice.

"I believed I was in the indirect way I have explained. I never said I killed him, you remember. It was a cruel, wicked thing, too, and I am afraid you can never forgive me." She was sobbing wildly.

"When I heard you explain so tenderly what you thought was my motive, the afternoon when we were going up to your old home, I was tempted to tell you right then and there, but I fainted. Both father and I have tried to tell you, but have not had the courage to confess how meanly we have acted. I was going to speak about this afternoon, when Tiny's message called me away. Oh, Dick, can you forgive both father and me?"

For the moment he felt that he could not. All the agony he had suffered came back to him. Then he remembered how perfect a wife she was, what a good woman she had proved herself. After that came the bewildering realization that there was no more dread, that the future was bright and clear, and that they could be happy without any fear of an overhanging shadow. With this he caught her in his arms, crying:

"My darling!" and she experienced the happiest moment of her life, for she knew that her husband loved her beyond any ordinary measure, in that he forgave her deception of him.

Suddenly he looked at her dear face, and whispered:

"But, dear, this all makes me think that you could have loved me considerably before we were married. I know you love me now, but I did not think you cared much before."

Rose smiled back at him, as she said very frankly:

"Dick, dear, the reason I appreciated that you loved me from the first was because I knew I loved you as soon as I first saw you."

"Why, my dear little girl!" he cried delightedly.

"Of course I did; I couldn't help it," she confessed, then added with a happy sigh: "I'm so tired, and the weather is trying. I know you are utterly worn out. Let's go for another two weeks in Valleydale."

With a joyful laugh that fell very gratefully upon the ears of Mr. Vandeville, Richard Kurston answered his wife in these words:

"Anything you say about anything pleases me, Rose." A moment later he added, smiling tenderly: "Oh, Rose, I expect Dad had better buy that paper for me to run. I've got to make good in earnest, not only for us two, sweetheart, but for those who will come after us."

And Rose Kurston knew that she was entirely forgiven.

The End.

Halloween.

Among the Celts who inhabited ancient Britain two of the most important of the many festivals of the year were Carts of May and of November, and were called Baltane or Beltein festivals, a name signifying sun and fire, rites with which they were celebrated really possessed many of the characteristics of the fetes of these people, interwoven with the Fireworshipers. At the beginning of a Beltein celebration all the fires of the community were put out and rekindled as much as one live coal must be left among the ashes of the chimney; then, with ceremony and sacrifice, the priests kindled the "needfire" by rubbing together two sticks or by the friction of a horizontal wheel revolving on a post. From the sacred sparks thus obtained an altar fire was built from which all the fires in the countryside were relighted. This "needfire" was believed to have the power to scare away witches, devils, fairies and the fiends of disease that lurked about human habitations; within the magic circle of its light no evil spirit might work its fateful spell.

There is nothing to which people cling with more tenacity than to the superstitions and the practices that pertain thereto, and so it was that when the early Christians began to proselyte their religion in heathen lands, they wisely made no fight on the fete days of the peoples they sought to convert, but wrought as they were with fanatical superstition; rather did they seek to Christianize these days by associating them with some of their own festivities, gradually letting the sacred rites supersede the pagan ones. Thus the heathen festitide became the holy season of Christmas; the springtime Beltein was made to coincide with the Eastertide festival one, fortunately falling on November 1, was transformed into one of the most beautiful festivals of the Christian Calendar—Hallowmas, or All Saints' Day. But tho the day thus lost its heathen significance, many of the beliefs clinging to it and the echo of these, weakened by civilization, has come down the ages to us. Halloween was the eve of Hallowmas, and on that night witches, goblins, witches and fairies were believed to be turned loose upon the earth for a holiday. It was considered the best future hung so waveringly that one, by proper signs and devices, might get a peep behind the veil. Thus it came to be the favorite night for the testing of fortunes.

In Scotland, where the Beltein superstitions supplanted long, girls wound their clews of yarn out of windows, expecting to find their future husbands holding the ends, and both lads and lassies stole out in the dark to sow hemp seed that a future spouse would come behind and harrow.

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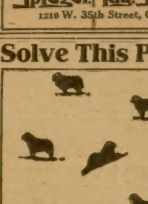

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THE DILEMMA.

When at night
In keen delight
With pipe and chair I've settled snug,
It's then I hear—
"Be careful, dear.
Don't drop your ashes on the rug."

My wife is right;
With all my might
I try for her to do my best.
I keep in mind
The rug I mind,
But matter takes on my vest.

It is too bad—
It makes me sad—
There seems no way of cheating;
'Tis rug and vest
I heave a sigh—
Most surely that is beating.

The Feminist—"No, Harold, I shall not promise to obey when we are married. I shall never be ruled by any one."

Harold—"Good! That means you are going to do without a cook."

A Sad Blow.

"When do you expect a report from the ore sample?"

"That's hard to say."

"Didn't they make a success of their investigations?"

"No. They were all woefully disappointed. They didn't find any vice worth mentioning."

What They All Said.

The two girls were walking along a suburban avenue, talking about their best young men, of course. At least, one of them was.

"Charley was up to see me last night," she said.

"That's twice in a week, isn't it?" inquired the other.

"Yes." And she blushed and giggled. "I suppose he'll come three times in the next week."

"I suppose so."

"And four times the next?"

"That's what brother says."

"And five times the next?"

"That's what sister says."

"And six times the next?"

"That's what auntie says."

"And seven times the next?"

"That's what papa says."

"And then what?"

"Then we'll get married; that's what everybody says."

"And then what?"

"Then I won't see him any more of an evening; that's what mamma says."

Late.

A certain distinguished professor of medicine asked one of his students in class one day how much of a certain medicine should be administered to the sufferer.

"A tablespoonful," answered the young man.

In about a minute, however, he raised his hand and said: "Professor, I would like to change my answer to that question."

The doctor took out his watch. "My young friend," he remarked, "your patient has been dead forty seconds."

Didn't Want a Lawyer.

An old negro was charged in a West Indian police court with chicken stealing, and the magistrate said:

"Have you any lawyer?"

"Ain't got none, sah."

"But you ought to have one," returned the court. "I'll assign one to defend you."

"No, sah, no, sah, please don't do dat," begged the defendant.

"Why not?" queried the magistrate. "It won't cost you anything. Why don't you want a lawyer?"

"Well, A'll tell yo', sah," said the old man confidentially, "A wants ter eat my dem chickens mahself."

Their Memorial.

At a party one evening a married lady was discussing the unexpected company with an account of the way she and her husband had memorialized their first quarrel. When they had made it up the husband had planted a tree in memory of it.

"If we had only done that," whispered another woman to her husband, "we might have had a whole avenue."

An Applicant.

When the dawn is in the sky
Mother hastily draws nigh,
Shattering the drowsy spell
That preceded the breakfast bell.
Busy still until the noon
Hour that comes all too soon;
Busy still until the chime
Glarjy rings for supper time;
Busy thru the twilight glow
As the stars begin to show;
Busy still till prayers are said
And the rest have gone to bed.
Even then to sleep she goes,
Vigilant in her repose,
Ever near the lightest call
That from childish lips may fall.

Yesterday she paused to smile,
Today, Marine, after wiles,
An arrangement we will see
For an eighteenth day for me.

A Long Time.

"Henry," said his wife, reproachfully, "do you know that it was three o'clock when you came home this morning?"

"You are mistaken, my dear," he replied. "It was just half-past one. I looked at the clock on the church tower going as I passed the corner."

"Far be it from me to doubt your word, Henry," answered his wife, "but if that is the case it must have taken you an to a man who considers himself a success in life."

"Do you believe in the Darwinian theory of evolution of species?"

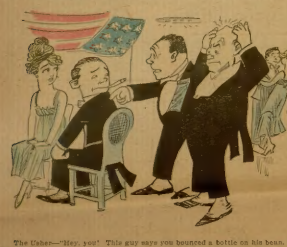
"Well, I'm forced to when I look in a glass."

Exacting Critics.

"I see Mr. Dubwaite playing ball with a crowd of boys."

"That's a good way for a man to keep young, I suppose."

"Maybe so, but the sarcastic remarks that he draws from the spectators make every time he makes a move after which he strikes out must be rather humiliating to a man who considers himself a success in life."



The Usher—"Hey, you! This guy says you bounced a bottle on his bean. What's the idea?"

The Guess—"Nothin'. Only he betted in on our party an' introduced himself as the 'Human Battleship' and I thought it was time he was christened."

He Had Courage.

During a debate in Parliament a conservative from Surrey was challenging the statement of his friend. "They grate their teeth at the mention of the Surrey members looking toward the Irish members. Why they haven't the courage to say 'boo' to a goose."

At the juncture one of the Irish members arose and looking the conservative squarely in the face, shouted "Boo!" Then he sat down.—Puck.

A Technical Wife.

Flatbush—"The English language has approximately 500,000 words, half of which are of a technical character. Do you ever study?"

Benedict—"Well, my wife uses 'em all. She's very technical, you know."

He Sympathized.

A humane society has secured a downstairs room whose window and door it will attach to the front of the bridge. "They grate their teeth at the mention of the Surrey members looking toward the Irish members. Why they haven't the courage to say 'boo' to a goose."

Yours Slowly Passing.

Friend—"What is the strangest case that you ever had in life insurance?"

Agent—"Miss Oldsad. She took out a twenty-year endowment policy in 1892 when she was 13 years of age, and it matures this year when she is 38."

That Depends.

"Don't you think there is money as well as health in getting next to the soil?"

"Certainly, if you can manage to strike pay dirt."

Quite Agreeable to Tippers.

"Scientists are now generally agreed that drunkenness is a disease, and that the man who drinks should be treated by a physician."

"Oh, well, most men who drink don't care who treats them."

Old Man (after kicking youth out of house)—What! You here again?"

Youth—"Yes, sir. I came to see if you couldn't be induced to join our football team?"

Terms.

Flatbush—"Are you interested with a medical practice?"

Bensonhurst—"No. Only own."

"What are the terms?"

"Why, we will take it off your hands at cost and you assume the mortgage."

His Property.

Old Biffleigh, after thinking restfully of the war and said that were being consumed downstairs, was just dropping off to sleep when he was roused by a moaning noise from below.

"Eva," he bellowed, making his way to the top of the stairs. "Eva! What on earth is that howling going on down there?"

"Howling, papa dear—a shocked tones. "Why, it's Mr. Chuffer singing 'Love's Old Sweet Song.' Isn't his voice fine, love him," growled Biffleigh, "and g'wags the silly young ass will be going to look after his property."

Settling It.

"Pahson," said Brother Rockslon, "me and Brudder Stanley Smith has been havin' an intellectual spute 'bout de pen and de sword. Which does you say, sah, am de mightier?"

"Well, sah," replied sage old Parson Sagster, "dey bofe has deir plats o' importance. Primitive, de sword am de best to stick into a man and de pen am de best to stick a man into. Hurrumph!"

Demand for Participation.

"Why do women want to vote?"

"Search me," replied Miss Cayenne. "we want to find out by experience how men have managed to make so many political blunders. It's always easier to put up with mistakes when you've had a hand in making them yourself."

Not Entirely Disliked.

"Nobody likes Dobson."

"Oh, yes, somebody does."

"Who?"

"Dobson."

He Misjudged Her.

As she went thru her letters at the breakfast table little Mrs. Newwedde caught sight of a check.

"Herbert, I didn't understand that," she said, as she toggled over one epistle to her husband. "Here is a notice from the bank to say that my account is overdrawn."

"Goodness!" gasped Herbert, startled. "But I gave you a check for $150 only last week! Surely you haven't spent all that?"

"Of course I haven't!" replied the lady, reproachfully. "Some burglar must have broken in. I haven't touched it since you gave it to me."

Real Events.

"Do any events of importance ever occur here?" hesitantly demanded the hypercritical young man from Kansas City.

"Well," calmly replied the landlord of the Petunia tavern, "Monday noon and last night happen here with unfailing regularity, and some of our home folks year to regard them as events of considerable importance."

Circumstantial Evidence.

"I believe Mrs. Pussy, who has such a passion for scandal, must have taken in washing before they made their money."

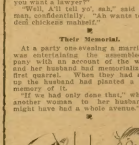
"What makes you think that?"

"Because her whole line of talk is a clothesline."

Impossible.

"I think I will organize a vegetable trust."

"Couldn't keep it quiet. There would be sure to be a leek somewhere."



Agent—"Is the boss of the house in?"

Proud Father—"Yes, he's asleep upstairs in his cradle."

The Most Wonderful Thing.

Thomas A. Edison, the inventor, tells this story:

"A school teacher was questioning her class on general knowledge.

"Now, girls," she said, 'what is the most wonderful thing that's man has ever made?'

"The class was silent as the grave, but presently one small girl's hand went up and the teacher looked encouraged. Its owner spoke:

"Please miss, I know—a living for his wife and family," she said."

Modern Advantages.

"So you think a young man has more opportunities than he had some time ago?"

"In some respects," replied Mr. Cumrox, "but in some he can't. He can't start with golf and motoring when he likes. I didn't have a chance to learn to joke. He gives my son a head on awful odds!"

Too Perplexing.

"No young girl really knows her own mind."

"How can she when she is torn between worship of a football hero and adoration of a movie idol?"

Mc—"Well, Walvard gained the most ground."

Shar—"Yes—but the Wintertons seem to have gained the most arms, legs, noses and ears."

One Exception.

"I see where some college professor says he has never met a man he could not hypnotize."

"Then he's never had a fellow try to sell him the latest encyclopedia or a highly pedigreed pup."

Nothing of the Kind.

"Hiram, did you find any obstruction in the path this morning?"

"Now, I didn't. 'Twasn't nothin' there but a big stone I dun took away so nobody break their necks on it."

Mean Preparations.

"Why did that campaign orator order mirrors placed in the sides of his touring car?"

"Because he wants to draw crowds when he speaks from it on the woman suffrage States."

Safe.

"Do you subscribe to the theory that love is a chemical reaction?"

"No," replied the sincere young person. "But I believe love should be able to stand the acid test."

HALLOWEEN PUMPKIN PIES

Our Moving Picture Show
Paw Perkins—Now, Maw, that's the biggest pumpkin I could find. Bake some of them old-fashioned pumpkin pies for supper. My mouth is just waterin' for pumpkin pie!"
The Boys—"Oh, Jimmy crickets, lookee this! Just what we been lookin' for! We'll fix it up an' scare Paw inter fits!"
Paw—"I can't keep my mind offen them nice, luscious pumpkin pies we're going to have tonight! What I'll do to them will sure be sufficient!
"Thunder and mud! What is that terrible thing? It's the Devil and I'm a goner! Oh, rats, it's nothing but the kids with a jack-o'-lantern!"
The Boys—"Look, Paw, at the dandy big pumpkin we found in the kitchen, and we carved all the insides ourselves an' made the pumpkin-lantern! Ain't it a peach?"

Masterful Morgan

Or, The Hostile Mountain

By William H. Manning

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CHAPTER VIII.

NEW DANGER.

BLUEFLOCK, the nearest town to the heart of the mountains, nestling in a break in the uplifts, had been snug-beaten and rain-driven, one after the other, and now lay with its bare, sodden streets steaming under a benign sun, but even sunshine could not make it cheerful then.

From the bordering hills came two riders, a man with upright alertness and a young woman who bowed with fatigue. John Morgan and Dora had fought the natural troubles of the gulches and won, and were now seeking the last stop west of the rugged summit.

The sheriff was well known to some there, and now he calmly made his way to the little hotel. They ate, she with out appetite and he with relish. Then Dora went to her room, almost falling asleep as she mounted.

"You, next," said the landlord. "How will this room suit?"

"I'll sleep by my horse," replied Morgan, quietly.

"Eh?"

"Reasons for it, Tyler. If I don't wake in three hours, stir me up. And, see here, mum is the word. Looks as if nobody but you and Dora ate, also with out appetite and he with relish. Then Dora went to her room, almost falling asleep as she mounted.

"You, next," said the landlord. "How will this room suit?"

"I'll sleep by my horse," replied Morgan, quietly.

"Eh?"

"Reasons for it, Tyler. If I don't wake in three hours, stir me up. And, see here, mum is the word. Looks as if nobody but you and Dora are here. Don't tell a soul now, and when I'm gone lock your mouth tight. See?"

Tyler replied affirmatively, and John added a few more words, secured dry clothes, and went to the stable. Comet was putting the finishing touches on his meat. His master rubbed his neck and head and talked to him like the good comrade he was.

"Now, old boy, we nap together, cheek to cheek. I can't afford to let an enemy slip in and perhaps get the best of me, must go thru. We are a stock company, heads, hands, legs, brains. Equal partners! Rest well, my dear boy, for the honest men of this State look to you to back me up. Understand?"

Comet nuzzled the caressing hand and, in horse language, said he understood and would fight with his master to the finish. Then Morgan lay down and slept.

Three hours later, when the landlord started to awaken him, he had a glimpse of the sheriff as he observed the hills to the east. The uplifts closed around him, but while Tyler looked he saw four men pass out of the frontier part of the town and move the same way.

"Don't know how many," he murmured, "but John will have company on the trail, and that will be pleasant."

Re-entering the hotel, the proprietor gave attention to his duties and was light-hearted until Dora awakened. Then he heard the sheriff's horse, and had half-hour, following her knowledge that the sheriff was gone. She ordered her horse and left the town.

At that moment the sheriff was well advanced on his ride, but wrestling with a problem. Twice previously he had heard something whistle past his head and the slightly remoter ring of a rifle. Racing forward cautiously, found where the unknown marksman had stood and waited, but the reason for the shooting was definitely settled. Possibly the shot had been meant for somebody else, but it took a good deal of faith to believe it.

Strengthened in a purpose he had carried in mind, he left the trail of the men and surveyed the outlying region as well as its nature permitted. He saw only one thing that was suspicious. Back on his trail four horsemen were jogging along in leisurely fashion. They were the quartet the landlord thought would make pleasant companions for him, but not seeing it that way, he smiled grimly, descended and resumed his way. From that point he took pains to break his trail, using the ravines that were running deep with melting snow.

The boast of Hough that men were to lie in wait and ambush him was not forgotten, and the four riders might be bound on the same business. Having given up all idea that only nature was to be fought on the journey, he was not well to ignore any man.

He was entering a wild, uninhabited region, and must make or break by his own efforts. Meanwhile, the fight of the opposition for the ballots would be kept up to the very door of the capitol building.

"They will get me if they can," he muttered, smiling.

No levity was back of that smile, for he knew the mood of the enemy at last. He was only one man, and the lonely reaches of the mountains made a fine place of violence, triumph and secrecy. If the ballots were seized and burned and he was in a hidden grave, it would be easy and plausible to give out the information that he had perished of cold on his way. Yet, he smiled. That was because he did not intend they should succeed.

It was three o'clock when, going easily, he rounded the shoulder of a side-rise and had a surprise. Before him was a fire, and by it, was a man. He was engaged in good works for his stomach, but dropped everything in hand and took up his rifle. There were reasons why he expected shooting to begin at sight, but Morgan did not raise a finger. His expression, however, indicated recognition.

"Hallo, Peter!" he called serenely.

"Hallo, sheriff!" was the ready reply.

"Getting dinner?"

"A late one, yes. Have a bite with me?"

"I ate some time ago."

"Then you must be hungry again. Sit by and nap."

"Thank you, I will," and so saying John swung to the ground, led Comet closer and hitched the blaze.

There was nothing commonplace about this. Just before the ballot-bearer left his home town one of the citizens had expressed the hope that Old Peter's gang of road-agents would not get him. Peter was a notorious character in the State. An outlaw, his thirst for other men's money was equaled only by his cunning at avoiding capture. It was his way to strike quickly, surely, lawlessly, and then disappear as if he had turned into a phantom; but he was credited with crime enough to over-ballast a score of souls, but never with a night's lodging in jail.

This was the man by the fire—a man past fifty, a veteran in his calling, resourceful and dangerous at all times. He and Morgan had clashed before then, but Morgan was taken at night. An hour before both would have been willing to bet that when they met bullets would fly immediately, yet neither opened the ball now. Just why they delayed neither knew.

"Here," said Old Peter calmly, "is prime meat. How do you like yours done?"

"Medium," John answered.

"I prefer mine rare. Take a seat! Got a warrant for me?"

"I think I have six or seven at home, but none here. How is business?"

"Great, but my line is hiding now. Reckon you are not hunting for me?"

"I was not."

"You have periods of right good sense, sheriff, more of the salt?"

They ate heartily, lian sitting with lion, both outwardly at ease, but on the watch for treachery. The truce was a breath of air, but, revolvers ready, they were at peace then. Waiting, they said nothing about former breaches of law, and, when satisfied with food, fell to smoking like true friends. When the pipes were exhausted Morgan knocked out his accumulation of ashes and spoke to Peter.

"Peter, I want something of you."

"I knew you did, sheriff. Name it."

"I suppose your back trail."

"Close to hand."

"I am followed. Summon your men and scare my pursuers and I'll not improve this chance to arrest you."

"Excellent, John! Well-advised plan, but while you've been building it up I've been thinking, too. My grandmother was a Yankee, and I'm a bargain-hunter by inheritance. Listen!"

The outlaw leaned forward, and, talking, constantly used his right hand with the index finger of the right, as if to punctuate his remarks.

"Hold all the ballots. I have all the news. You are on your way to the capital with the ballots, and the Grandley men want to prevent your getting them. That's your present business and your difficulty."

"Well?"

"I want most of the votes to go on—most of them. My men and I cast our ballots for Woodrear."

"The deuce you did! I wasn't aware you were a legal voter."

"Neither is half a dozen of us voted thru the persuasion of seven guns, but we're sure we did it. We want seven ballots back. Now, John, if you'll hand over those bits of paper we'll kill off your pursuers. Is it a bargain?"

Morgan made a speechless astonishment, for it was plain that Peter was looking. The ballots faced a new end of activity.

CHAPTER IX.

HARD PRESSED.

OLD PETER shifted his position a little, and then clasped his hands over his knees and became the proper picture of a man resting after a day of honest toil.

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"Politics and voting are usually unsatisfactory matters," he proceeded thoughtfully. "I and six men took a good deal of pains to vote this time because it was generally said that it was a duty. We attended to duty on election day. Went to a town that need not be named and asked for ballots. We were refused, but we argued the point so well that we prevailed. This"—the speaker touched his revolver—"was one of the arguments, and there were six more just like it. We told them we wanted to do our duty, and that maybe they would find it that they refused us. They let us vote."

The picture thus painted appealed to Morgan and he smiled.

"And they let you go away?"

"Yes," Peter returned. "Never even urged us to stop to supper."

"Seven votes for Woodyear?"

"Hang it, yes, and since then we've learned that Woodyear says he will 'capture a lot of us by putting soldiers on our track. Of course he doesn't know of our having voted, but his threat shows a mean spirit, and that is why I want those seven votes back."

"Unfortunately, Peter, they are now bunched with the rest."

"Any seven will do."

"You have to appear at the capital and settle it there."

"You forget my proposal, John. Back a ways I heard men 'hoodoo' and never would get to your destination, but were just the same as dead one. No need for that, sheriff, for I and my men have no reason to love you, for you have forced your attentions on us a whole lot in the past, but my offer still stands. Take seven Woodyear ballots from your pack and burn them, and then I and my fellows will see our safe in riding all danger to have to shoot a man every mile to do it. Without our help you can never take your ballots there the gang that is out to rob you. With our help you are perfectly safe. And it is simple."

The road-agent, sitting at his ease, explained the scheme calmly, and there was no doubt he meant it. When Morgan hoped that, some time in the future, he would be able to laugh at the plan as its superficial feature seemed to demand, but he knew it was no time to laugh when Old Peter made a demand in earnest. Amiable as the fellow now was, trouble showed behind his fair words.

"Unfortunately," was the reply, "the law says I must take all the votes thru."

"The law!" Peter mused aloud. "I've heard it, I think, but only in a vague way. Anything more?"

"My duty—"

"Stick to the English language, sheriff. I never heard that word before."

Dropping his hands away from his knees the outlaw suddenly sat bolt upright.

"Let's drop all this—nonsense," he added, his voice changing to curtness. "To business! Do you accept seven ballots?"

The good humor of the man was gone, and, looking at him, Morgan understood better why Peter Burnap had earned a reputation. Keen, unscrupulous and determined, he was a bad customer to have difficulty with. The sheriff wondered how near the other members of the band were, but was too wise to look. Peter, if there, was dead set on this, despite his evil reputation.

"You don't get a ballot!" he tersely replied.

"Then we shall get you!"

"We can and will make try to do will not prevent me from walking into the capitol building with all the votes intact. Why not accept my proposal for those seven, Peter? Even if they were burned they would not change the result of the election."

"Not a bit," the outlaw admitted. "Woodyear would still have a majority. I know that perfectly well. Take seven Woodyear ballots from your pack and burn them, and then I and my fellows will see you safe in riding all danger to have to shoot a man every mile to do it. Without our help you can never take your ballots there the gang that is out to rob you. With our help you are perfectly safe. And it is simple."

The road-agent, sitting at his ease, explained the scheme calmly, and there was no doubt he meant it. When Morgan hoped that, some time in the future, he would be able to laugh at the plan as its superficial feature seemed to de-

"I have you!" calmly remarked the sheriff. "Don't try to draw, and don't whistle for your men who may possibly be near. You are my prisoner, and I'll take you thru to the capital with me."

The words had barely passed his lips when there was a rattle near at hand which both knew was made by the feet of horses. Riders were coming, and it meant much to both men, but neither looked to see who they were. Morgan could not shift his gaze without being shot by his so-called prisoner, and the latter refrained from looking because he felt sure the newcomers were his own men, and he wanted the glory of having the drop on the sheriff without their help. Ready to move like a flash, he eyed Morgan with assurance.

"Soldiers! They've come ahead of the new Governor's call."

So said the sheriff, dangling a bait, and for the first time in many days Peter was tricked into folly. Soldiers! It was a reference calculated to startle him than any other, and he looked hurriedly to see if the claim was true. With his attention diverted for the chance that Morgan wanted was open, and he was about to leap upon the outlaw when sixteen were wrong.

A coil settled around his neck, tightened, and he was jerked backward over his shoulders. A man he could not see had lassoed him, and when the rope tightened he was helpless to help himself.

Peter laughed merrily. "That's one on you, sheriff!" he commented. "I always choose my comrades with good judgment. Here is proof of it!"

He took two long steps, escaped a clump of bushes, and disappeared in a niche in the cliff.

Morgan was under no great discomfort, and at once he whirled the whirling around and was on his knees. A few yards distant he saw four men, but they were not soldiers, and Morgan started at them blankly, and they seemed to be even more astonished.

"Burnap!" the sheriff exclaimed

"Morgan!" the leader of the newcomers cried sharply.

The lariat-rearer swung his hand toward the niche.

"That was Old Peter, and he's getting away!" he reminded.

Burnap shouted an order, and his men sprang from their mounts and ran toward the niche. Burnap showed a disposition to linger, but the sheriff cast off the lasso and pressed on others. Brief examination showed that the niche ended, twenty feet away, in a semi-chasm and that Peter had taken two chances and gone down it somehow. Now he was not to be seen. Burnap ordered further pursuit, but himself remained with Morgan.

"I'm mightily ashamed to have lassoed you," he said apologetically, "but your back was turned and I supposed you to be one of Peter's gang. Never suspected it was Peter himself. Say, sheriff, who I now recall you were to start for the capital. Confound him! Why didn't he speed you, and have nabbed Peter."

"Right, but we'll have to charge it up to that rebuke a lurk. Peter has never been found so tight that he didn't worm out of it. But, Burnap, I certainly didn't expect to meet you here."

"Been hunting for Peter and his men. Got track of the leader, and passed thru difficult, slippery man and then lost the game thru m fool act in roping what I thought was only a pony. Say, here I get out of the mountains I'll reckon and let some woman have my job."

Morgan nodded, thinking a little back ward. Burnap, like himself, was a sheriff and the only one in the office . . . his detachment had made up the men he had seen, previously, riding his way. After all the surprises of the landlord that the four would make pleasant companions for Morgan had not been wide of the mark.

In an hour it was known that Peter

Surprisingly Good Cough Syrup Made at Home

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You'll never really know what a fine cough syrup you can make at home until you prepare this famous home-made remedy. You only have to be compared with the ready-made kind, but you will also have a more dependable and effective remedy in every way. It overcomes the usual cough from ordinary colds in 24 hours—relieves even whooping cough quickly.

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The prompt and positive results given by this pleasant tasting cough syrup have caused it to be used in more homes than any other remedy. Quickly loosens a dry, hoarse or tight cough, heals the inflamed membranes that line the throat and bronchial tubes, and relief comes almost immediately. Splendid for throat tickle, hoarseness, bronchitis, croup and bronchial asthma.

Pinex is a highly concentrated compound of genuine Norway pine extract, combined with other elements, used for generations for throat and chest ailments.

Avoid disappointment by asking your druggist for "2½ ounces of Pinex" with full directions, and don't accept anything else. A guarantee of absolute satisfaction or money promptly refunded goes with this preparation. The Pinex Co., 204 Main Street, Ft. Wayne, Ind.

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Depending on leg-strap or spring trusses—like shown below—is little less than suicidal. They are cruel torture to the rupture sufferer, next to impossible to make them retain a rupture and are simply a curse to wear! Hold without binding!—They are simply a curse to wear!

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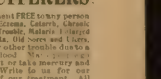

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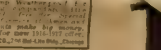

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All GIVEN for selling 24 packages of our Jewelry at 10c each. Write today for premium list and order.

COLUMBIA NOVELTY CO. DEPT. 47, EAST BOSTON, MASS.

Boys! Start to Earn Xmas Money

Every boy likes to have money for Christmas. The up-to-date boy begins in the fall to earn money so he can have it when Christmas comes around. Our plan makes it easy to get a week selling The Saturday Blade, Chicago Ledger, Farming Business and Lone Scout. People in every town know our good papers and want more to use the papers from each week. We send the papers all in one bundle so that they come to you at one time, on Friday. You have a paper route in every case, a man's or boy's. Easy to sell and build up a route of steady customers. You make a cash profit on every paper you sell. You can't lose. You don't send us any money until you sell the papers.

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Each active agent for our papers is appointed a Lone Scout by Chief Totem of the Lone Scouts, or made a Lieutenant, and Certificate of Membership and other booklets of instructions in this great organization. It is easy to get started, but each one should hurry, for the appointments are coming up quickly by boys. Just fill out the blank below and we will send you a complete outfit. We tell you how to get the customers and how to make out your reports.

W. D. BOYCE CO., 512 NORTH DEARBORN STREET, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

I accept the agency for your 4 papers. Send me as many copies of each as you think I can sell the first week. I will be pleased to receive my Certificate of Membership in the Lone Scouts and leader and booklet of instructions from Chief Totem FREE. Also tell me how to get started in the valuable premiums.

Name ..

.. State ..

had really escaped, and as the ballot-bearer saddled for renewal of his journey farewell words were spoken with burnap

"Oh! by the way," suddenly said [illegible] "I saw a woman riding this way [illegible] back. I wonder [illegible] looked curiously at his companion—"if you knew she was near. [illegible] was Dora Bingham.

Morgan's brow clouded. "Did you pay coming this way? And this side of Bluffie's [illegible] Yes [illegible] turnap, take her back!" She will perish if she sticks to these mountains. Take her back!"

I'll do it. Some strategy will prob-

(Continued on Page 15.)

Classified Want Ads

Classified Want Ad Information

The rate for one insertion in Chicago Ledger and one insertion in The Saturday Blade is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size of ad or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500 N. Dearborn St. CHICAGO, ILL.

SALESMEN WANTED

TOBACCO FACTORY WANTS SALESMAN—Good hustler, steady work and promotion, as [illegible] unnecessary, as we w[illegible] instructions. Piedmont Mfg. Co.

AGENTS WANTED

EVERY HOME ON FARM, IN SMALL TOWN or suburb, needs and will buy the wonderful Aladdin Kerosene (coal-oil) Mantle Lamp. Five times as bright as electric. Tested and recommended by Government and 34 leading universities. Burns common coal oil. One farmer cleared over $500 in 4 weeks. Introduce with ridiculously low price of $1.00 to $100 per month. No capital required; we furnish goods on time to reliable parties. Write for sample lamp for free trial, distributor's proposition and secure appointment in exclusive territory. Mantle Lamp Co., 607 Aladdin Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS—MAKE A DOLLAR AN HOUR instead of a dollar a day. We control a famous patent and will prove it. Any one who knows how to operate engine lathe, drill press, planer, milling machine, tin, brass, copper utensils and rubber goods without help, can put cement or rivet. Sample package and handsome catalogue of these wonderful tools free. Collette Mfg. Co., Dept. 707 E, Amsterdam, N. Y.

AGENTS: UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITY to make good money selling wonderful Angle Lamp. Burns common coal oil. Brighter than 10 ordinary lamps. Needs no chimney. Brilliant light below lamp where needed. 10 hours one quart oil. Sells on sight. Every housewife a prospect. Write for sample offer selling plan; exclusive territory. Angle Lamp Co., 917 Angle Bldg., St. Paul, Minn.

AGENTS, HUGE OPPORTUNITY—PHILBAR Laundry Washer. Only cabinet washer; operation selling plan, low price and quick repeats. Genuine wringer. Exclusive territory rights. Philbar Mfg. Co., 804 S. Sixth St., St. Louis, Mo.

WE START YOU IN BUSINESS, FURNISH everything; men and women, $25 to $200 a week; operating our New System Specialty Candy Factories and Stores. Valuable opportunity lifetime; booklet free. E. Rags-dale Co., East Orange, New Jersey.

AGENTS—SMALL BATCH-LOOKING IMPORTED 26x48 rugs, $1 each. Carter, Tenn., sold 100 in 4 days, 1 month, $87. You make $50. Write for sample offer selling plan; exclusive territory. People buy on sight. Credit given. Cordon, Importer, Stonington, Maine.

AGENTS: COUPER MADE $911 LAST month, $911 last week, selling 20th Century Raincoats. New proposition. We deliver and collect. Sample Coat Free. Couper Mfg. Co., Seward St., Dayton, Ohio.

AGENTS—NEW PATENTED CURTAIN ROD. Newest novelty in every home. 100% profit. Four to ten sales at every home. Write for free Sample Rod. Rodlock Co., 1 Rodlock Bldg., Providence, R. I.

AGENTS—$60 PROFIT; GOLD AND SILVER sign letters for store and office windows. Any one can put on. Big demand. Liberal sample. Metallic Letter Co., 416 N. Clark, Chicago.

AGENTS: HIGHLY PROFITABLE RETURNS selling our Drawn Goods, Hosiery, Underwear and Specialties. Several lines in addition. Write at once. National Importing & Mfg. Co., Dept. C-34, 1107 Broadway, New York.

PORTRAIT AGENTS SEND FOR OUR large catalog. 16x20 frames 16c up. Free sample offer. Crayons, Pastels given. Friedman Mfg. Co., Box 120, Marion, Ind.

BIG SENSATION! HI-PIECE TOILET AS-sorting set free! Whirlwind stunt! Newest, fastest $10 one day seller. Rex Chem. Co., 1 Lake St., Chicago.

YOUNG MAN, WOULD YOU ACCEPT A responsible position with a reliable house, where you can make $1,000 a year? Write us for particulars. Address Box 1, Station A, Chicago.

A REAL FACTORY WANTS REPRE-sentatives to sell shirts, underwear, hosiery, neckwear, skirts, aprons, dress goods. Write for samples. Madison Mills, 546 Broadway, New York.

MEN AND WOMEN—$1,500 to $5,000 YEAR-ly taking orders for over 70 Household Specialties. Full time or spare time. Particulars. Duo Factories, Dept. B54, North Java, N. Y.

AGENTS—SELL RELIABLE CUSTOM MADE raincoats. Big profits. Outfit free. Write for sample line free. Temple Raincoat Co., Box 1, Temple Bldg., Boston.

AGENTS—GIVE A NEW SOAP GAME that's a dandy. New stuff; 100% profit. Every family will buy. Write today. Sales Laconian Co., Dept. 21, St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS SELL OUR SHIRTS DIRECT from the Factory. Send for Catalog. R. B. O. Hat Manufacturing Co., Monument, Boston.

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$10 PER 1,000 ALLOWED DISTRIBUTING. Big free sample outfit. Peerless Soap Co., Lancaster, N. H.

REMNANT STORE, CINCINNATI, OHIO Big money-making bargains in cards, cloth-in and store keepers supplied.

HELP WANTED

WANTED—MEN AND WOMEN, 18 OR over, for Government Railway Mail Clerks—Clerks at Washington $75.00 month. Write for list of positions. Dunlap, P 13, Rochester, N. Y.

LADY OR GENTLEMAN TO TRAVEL FOR wholesale house. Salary $75 monthly and expenses. Position permanent. Address Manager, 325 Dearborn, Chicago.

$5 WEEKLY COLLECTING NAMES AND addresses. Send stamp. [illegible] Monroe, Mo.

HELP WANTED—(Continued)

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to write us. We make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, offer or here.

$520 FOR RELIABLE MAN OR WOMAN; distribute 2,000 free bags Borax Powder with Soaps, etc., in your town. No money or experience needed. E. W. Ward Co., 1743 Institute Place, Chicago.

$15 WEEK. BECOME AUTO CHAUF-feur. Tennessee Sanford Sanders finished Franklin Institute, Dept. F 819, Rochester, N. Y.

OVER 37 DAILY FAMILY EARNED KNIT-ting at home. Distance immaterial; no canvassing; furnished on time. Send 2c. stamp for particulars. Franklin Knitting Co., Franklin St., Buffalo, N. Y.

$5 A DAY GATHERING EVERGREENS, Ferns, Roots, Herbs, etc., brings book and war prices. Particulars free. Botanical Co., West Haven, Conn.

EARN BIG MONEY SELLING PERSONAL and Christmas Cards. Outfit free. Strathmore Press, Cambridge, Mass.

$30 WEEKLY COLLECTING NAMES AND addresses. Company furnishes rig. Send stamp for contract. Sun, Lacey, Mich.

BECOME DETECTIVES—EARN BIG MONEY; easy work. Write Captain Wagner, 1243 Lexington Avenue, New York.

MALE HELP WANTED

WANTED: IF YOUR TIME IS WORTH $21 weekly, six months' spare time will exhibit our feature attractions. Hiscock, Majestic Theatre Building, Los Angeles. Write in picture theatres. We give largest men or women a yearly contract. Write us at once. Address Queen City Feature Company, Dept. 219, Cincinnati, Ohio.

WANTED, MEN AND WOMEN TO QUALI-fy for Government positions. Several thousand appointments to be made next few months. Full information about grades, how to prepare, etc., free. Write immediately for booklet C-21, 1134, Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

MEN BECOME LOCOMOTIVE FIREMEN, Engineers; Electric Motormen and Conductors; $150 monthly. Hundreds placed by us last year. Big money. Hundreds placed by us last year. Big money. Hundreds placed by us last year. Big money

Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1895, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

Published Every Saturday

By W. D. BOYCE CO., CHICAGO, ILL.

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READERS WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Love that seldom grows old is the love of money.

An adage that cuts all round must be a circular saw.

Beware of a widow who acts as if she was glad of it.

Never argue with a wasp. It is sure to carry its point.

And the less a man knows, the less he seems to know it.

Time is money—to the man who is working out a fine.

Even Helen of Troy was fair, but she preferred a brunette.

Truth is mighty—and mighty inconvenient for some people.

A good business qualification is the ability to attend to your own.

The factory hand that sings at his work lets up with the whistle.

It takes more than a wooden head to produce thoughts that will burn.

Nothing pleases a fat woman more than to have some man call her his little girl.

Men sometimes worship women because they are unable to understand them.

It's not much use to lay your plans unless you warm up to your work and hatch them out.

Don't keep a leap year girl waiting for an answer. She may have another engagement in view.

It is not necessary to keep the milk of human kindness in a refrigerator. It isn't heat that sours it.

A woman does as she pleases before marriage, and after marriage her husband does as she pleases.

When a young man gets sore because another fellow makes goo-goo eyes at his best girl—that is love.

When a young man is intoxicated with love he has his own ideas as to what makes the world go round.

Occasionally riches fly away from an honest man and roost on the perch erected by the other fellow.

A successful financier is a man who can separate other men from their money without the aid of a sandbag.

It makes little difference to the average man what church he attends, provided there are cushions on the seats.

An old bachelor observes that married men are often as anxious to get out of matrimony as single fools are to get in.

What singular contradictions there are throughout nature and life. For example, salt water gives us fresh fish, and hot words produce coolness.

Masterful Morgan.

(Continued From Page 14.)

only be a question, for I'm not old enough to show the hand hand, but, depend upon it, when I see her again, I shall not know where you are, and we shall not be able to find you if you keep going on your way. I'll outwit but not anger her."

"Excellent! Well, I'm off."

He glanced at the sky, and Burnap followed his example.

"More snow," said the latter.

"Yes, and there's promise of a whole lot."

"Better get as far as you can before it strikes. I understand what your errand is, and wish you good luck, but it will be a tough job from here on. If snow falls as plentiful as it looks likely to do. Watch sharp to your life, John!"

"I'll try."

The ballot-bearer swung into the saddle, spoke again briefly, and was off on his journey, and Burnap watched him go and shook his head. He had seen too much of the mountains to underestimate the chances.

"He's got to play checkers with death, but if anybody can get over the summit Masterful Morgan is the one. Now I'll prepare for the slightly smaller task of managing Dora Ingraham."

CHAPTER XI.

MAD WATERS.

FOUR days later, on the other side of the mountain spur, nothing but chaos reigned. There had been a heavy fall of snow, followed by rain, and the high supply of water had turned brooks into temporary rivers. Canyons and gulches ran high with the liquid that had madly thru them, and the gurgle of water and crash of uprooted trees blended with the thunder of cataracts. Nature was on a rampage, mad with the intoxication that had come of its efforts.

Along a slope, thinly covered with snow not yet melted, a man moved slowly, necessarily careful of each step. It was John Morgan, making his way on foot toward the State capital, the ballots strapped to his person.

The history of the previous days was like a leaf from a mudhouse record. He had met and passed, when the lay of the mountain footing turned to treacherous ways, had toiled, fought, used his best judgment, and then, when that failed, was swept away on a giant snowslide, had continued on foot, himself liable to perish in another slide or to drown in the wild raceways, but still plodding on toward his destination, and still guardian of his trust.

The hard struggle had left its mark upon him. His face was growing haggard, his eyes deep-set, and his shoulders sagged, but there was no weakness of will. He was a man, grim, dogged, set, but—the ballots were going thru. Masterful Morgan was not yet conquered.

Just now he was making for a spot fit to use for the night, for darkness was falling and it was impossible to advance except by day, but suitable places were hard to find after the deluge.

While searching he was astonished to detect the glimmer of a light, but it was a feature not to be slighted. He moved toward it expecting to see a camp fire, but was further surprised at sight of a cabin. Closely tucked in under the foot of a high cliff, and hiding what was really a cave minus a front wall, it stood firm where he had supposed no structure, even small, was to be found for many miles.

An atom of the mountains, it sent out a friendly light that cheered him wonderfully. He advanced, reached the door and knocked.

"Come in!" called a hearty voice promptly.

Morgan lifted the latch and threw back the door. He was in a room before a fire, and was ready to make known his needs, but, with continued promptness, the welcoming man waved his hand toward a chair.

"Sit down!" he directed calmly. "Supper will be ready for you in minutes, and it was planned for three persons."

"It can't be that you expected me," replied Morgan, with the force of others matter-of-factness.

"Every meal here is cooked with thought for possible visitors. Such a person comes only about once in six months, but the birds eat the overflow at other times. No excuse for waste in this world. You, George W.," he added, raising his voice.

An inner door opened and a jet-black negro appeared.

"Yes, sah!" he replied cheerfully.

"Plates for three."

"Yes, sah. Master Fillmore," the black man returned and grinned.

"I fear," continued the master, turning to his guest, "that you found the walking indifferent, Colonel."

"Villainous!" Morgan tersely exclaimed.

"Been there myself. Far from good." No doubt you are curious—

"Not at all. Never was curious in my life. Waste of strength!"

Morgan nodded, perceiving that he had to do with an original character. Fillmore was about 35 years old, tall, slender, but muscular, and, much to guest's surprise, clearly very intelligent. In looks he was like a college professor of unusual mental alertness, the physicality he stood at an indifference that approached indolence.

George W. worked briskly, and the table was soon set for three and covered with food that included meat and bread, a supply, on the whole, that was remarkable in that desolate region. When it was [illegible] the guest came to explanations.

"My name is Morgan, and I am carrying the ballots cast in Bludsoe County to the capital," he said briefly.

"Oh! Been an election, has there?" returned Fillmore, yawning.

"Yes. I dare say you have not heard the result."

"Kindly omit telling me. An election, eh? I haven't voted for ten years—against my principles. Don't like the company I have when I cast a ballot. Not over one man in five is fit to vote, yet things are turned over to the ignorant fours. The so-called civilized parts of the country are ruled by ignorance, and that's why I live here and never vote. Good rule in life is to keep out of bad company."

"Well, [illegible] argument, "there [illegible] taking the ballots [illegible] State capital. Being an officer, that is my duty."

Fillmore straightened up suddenly.

"Duty!" he echoed, with sudden force. "That is something that no right-minded man can be indifferent to. So it's your duty to take the ballots to headquarters? Been having a hard time, I reckon? Had to fight snow, rain, floods and so forth, eh?"

"Yes, and now I'm without a horse. Lost him in a snowslide, and I [illegible] to continue my way on foot."

"Shall find another horse in thirty miles, and there's no railroad. What will you do?"

"Plod along on foot."

Fillmore drummed on the table and looked deeply thoughtful. Then he wheeled upon the negro.

"George W., how many [illegible] demanded keenly.

"All right, sah," the black man answered quickly.

"Can you manage it in Bottle Gulch, with the flood to contend with?"

"Sure, sah."

"Excellent! George W. will convey you fifteen miles, which will take you

(Continued on Page 18.)

PIANO FREE To the person who sends us not later than November 10, 1916, the nearest and most artistic correct solution of the Famous 23 Puzzle, of this paper or similarly proportioned design, we will give Free a beautiful Upright Piano. Use the spaces, numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 only once, placing one figure in each square, so when added up and down, or right and left, the total will be 23. In case of a tie, Piano will be given each winner. Write your name and address plainly. You will be notified by mail as to your success and given our piano proposition. Mail your reply at once to Department 7,

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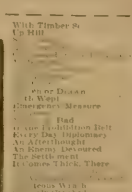

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Lone Scout Boys

Or, For Preparedness

By St. George Rathborne

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Begun in No. 12, October 14. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER V—(Continued)

THE six left behind accordingly set about making themselves as comfortable as the conditions allowed. First of all they waited to be in a position to keep an eye on the little gleam of light, shining apparently from some small window opening on that side of the shack that they could not expect to follow the progress of [illegible], and indeed, both Abner and Hi Henry had failed from the first immediately after leaving the spot where the parting took place. But, nevertheless, it seemed to please each boy to keep vigil over that telltale light.

What Hi Henry had said last of all must have impressed more than any of the other fellows for they kept very still, as tho given up to thought. Could one of his direful prediction be the truth, and would it turn out that some dreadful desperado had taken up his quarters in the cabin, with whom they were apt to be at doggerheads during the entire time they passed in the woods?

It was not an agreeable thought, to tell the honest truth, for those who allowed the fancy to take possession of their minds felt considerable uneasiness concerning it. Truth to tell, each fancied they would be imagining all sorts of exciting things, and picturing fresh difficulties ahead of them that they must meet and subdued manfully.

How slowly the minutes passed! While Abner had not attempted to set any particular time on the length of their stay, still to the minds of Luke and Oscar, and possibly Carl Betts, as well, it evidently began to seem as tho the absent ones were away a very significant length of time.

"I hope now nothing will happen to them," whispered Oscar, finally.

"Shucks! What could get them?" demanded Wee Willie Winkle, for the small member of the Trio was evidently the most aggressive of the entire lot. "If anybody jumped on them, don't you reckon Hi Henry'd have let out a yell that could be heard a mile away? Make up your mind they're all to the good, and that they'll show up here when they get ready."

After that no one said anything for another little space of time, for the most optimistic Winkle boy was beginning to feel worried by now, altho he would not allow himself to betray the fact for anything. He tried to tell himself that any number of things could happen to cause delay when fellows were engaged upon a piece of business like spying on an enemy's camp.

All this time the light had continued to gleam thru the darkness. Once in a while some object moved back and forth in a mysterious fashion that puzzled the boys; but they finally judged that it must be the branch of a tree that waved in the night breeze, occasionally coming between them and the small window of the cabin.

Something stirred close by and gave them a start, but they soon decided that it must be a little animal, possibly a coon, trying to learn what these intruders on two legs wanted in its domain.

Then a voice reached them. It was a gruff voice, to be sure, and evidently belonged to a big man. The boys shuddered and held their breath under the impression that perhaps their chums had been discovered by prowling giant of the cabin, and that this was a threat intended for their terrorizing.

So for quite a time could tell, however, it proved that one man who had stepped out of the cabin door was simply calling back something to the others still inside. Everybody breathed freely again when this fact became manifest; for a load seemed to be lifted from their hearts. Then Abner and Hi Henry had not been discovered, after all, and things stood just as they were at the time the pair started on their spying trip.

"He's gone in again, all right," ventured Cliff Almwell.

"Yes, that's a fact, for I saw him open the door and close it again" added Wee Willie Winkle.

"I'm getting stiff with the cold sitting here so long," grumbled Oscar.

"Then why don't you limber up by exercising a bit?" suggested Luke Morrison. "You're always preaching that to you want, and make no noise worth mentioning. That's always my way of warming up in cold weather. Try it, Oscar, why don't you?"

"Guess I will," the discontented Scout replied as he got on his feet and began to stamp. "Might as well be doing something to pass the time away while waiting for the boys to come back."

He therefore started to go thru certain exercises, sending out his clinched fists vigorously, and succeeding in keeping up a decent exertion till the blood went tingling to his extremities.

"A little less noise, Oscar, if you please. Don't grunt so when you shoot out your fists!" remarked Wee Willie. "First thing you know we'll be having those men headed this way, thinking there's a bear prowling around and asking to be shot."

"Oh, I'm done by now," the other told him, once more resuming his seat on the ground, and panting from his exertions, tho in a fine glow.

"Hark! I thought I heard Abner signal just then, and I reckon they're coming back!" whispered the small Scout, eagerly.

Every fellow bent his head and listened intently. Presently they caught what appeared to be the faint twitter of some species of night bird, disturbed on its perch and protesting to its mate.

"That's Abner; I know his signal all right!" remarked Cliff, softly; "they're on the way back and want us to cheer up. Now we'll know what they've learned, and for one I certainly hope it's going to pay us for all that long wait."

"Just hold on and see what's going to happen," suggested Wee Willie Winkle; "because I've got a sort of hunch that we're in for a surprise of some sort."

He never said truer words, tho at the time, of course, he must have been making a mere guess, since there was no way of suspecting the truth.

Presently those who kept their eyes fastened upon the path where they knew the trail lay could just manage to detect some moving object advancing toward them. This they knew was one of their recent comrades, coming down low and walking in a cautious manner as became a true Scout on duty bound.

Then two others, also in dark figures joined them, Abner and Hi Henry. Before a single word had been said, somehow, the boys knew that he who had remained behind understood that their messengers were bringing them great news.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT THE SPIES LEARNED.

"WELCOME, little strangers! Glad to see you back again!" said Wee Willie Winkle, meaning of course to be sarcastic, but finding it the same time to modulate his squeaky voice so as not to be heard beyond a certain short distance the effect was even more ridiculous than he imagined.

"Hish! Don't talk yet! We must move farther away from this shack before telling you what we saw and heard!"

When Abner Kent made this warning remark his voice sounded short, and a genuine thrill chasing up and down the spinal columns of each and every one of the six Scouts of the party waiting to go impatiently for the return of the spies.

They proceeded to fall in and keep a close order behind their leader, and when he started along the back trail. Perhaps several of the fellows found themselves experiencing a significant retrograde movement meant an inglorious retreat; but on second thought they came to the conclusion that Abner Kent was not the one to shirk any duty that came his way.

Cliff Almwell grew in leaps and bounds until they were fairly bursting with a desire to know what all this mystery and secrecy was about. So occupied the lone woods cabin, and what terrible thing had they done to cause the two Scouts to act in this singular way?

Their leader measured his distance with the same thoroness he did everything he undertook to accomplish. When he believed he had reached a point where ordinary voices could be carried to the cabin, he halted. This was the signal for the rest to huddle around him, each expectant face turned toward Abner even as the spokes of a wheel point in the direction of the hub.

"Now open up, some us, please, Abner," pleaded the small edition of the Winkle family.

"Reckon we'll certainly burst if you don't," added Luke, "we're that filled with old woman curiosity."

"Who are those men, Abner, and what under the sun are they doing up here bothering Lone Scouts who have set out for a jolly time in camp?" asked Al Porter.

"First, let me tell you just how we managed to creep up close enough to spy on the occupants of the cabin," remarked their leader, evidently bent on going about his business in a big way.

"You see, having spent those weeks here last year, I was acquainted with every foot of ground around, because of that knowledge didn't have a bit of trouble leading Hi Henry along a little depression that took us to the back of the cabin.

"Then, again, I remembered that there was a place where the back wall had that had filled the chinks when the shack was built years ago had crumbled away, so that the wind used to whistle thru the holes whenever it started up nights. I filled those gaps myself, but the mud fell away again about the time we were leaving.

"Well, just as I guessed, somebody had been filling the cracks again with fresh mud that had not even hardened as yet. It was the easiest thing going to pick at this, and pull away enough to let us peep thru.

"Two men were inside the cabin. They had a fire going, and that gives the glow you notice. Of course, I understood this beforehand, on account of the flickering of the light; yes, and Hi Henry mentioned the fact to me while we were on the way.

"One fellow is a regular giant, with a bushy beard. We heard the other call him Herman. This second man is just an ordinary-sized fellow, but he's got the meanest face either of us ever glimpsed. The big man called him

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Peter, and I wager that when it comes down to thinking up evil things, and trying to carry them out, that same Peter couldn't be beaten in a month of Sundays. He's surely a bad egg."

"I subscribe to every word Abner says, remember," muttered Hi. Henry, who seemed in an unusually serious frame of mind, some of the others fancied, as tho what he had just seen and heard might have made a tremendous impression on him.

"Please go on!" urged Wee Willie Winkle, who had been holding his breath, such was the intent way in which he hung upon every word Abner spoke.

"After we had punched those small holes thru the half-hardened mud," continued the leader, "and had taken a good look at the two men, we began to get our ears close to the cracks so as to catch what they were saying. And almost with the first word Abner grabbed I want to tell you it began to seem mighty chilly out there, for we began to have shivers coming all over us.

"Great Jupiter! What could it be?" gasped Oscar Summerlin.

"First of all, we heard them speaking about dynamite, and naturally that was enough to start us listening for all we were worth," said Abner, growing even more impressive the closer he drew to the climax. "Then we saw that the smaller man was working with a queer contraption, and handling it all so gingerly that it burst on both of us it might be some more of Mike's terrible bomb, tho neither of us had ever set eyes on such a thing before, you understand.

"By degrees, as we heard them talking things over, we began to get an idea what sort of desperate scheme they had in their minds. And, fellows, as sure as you live we've gone and run up against a fragment of the great World War right here in our own United States, and not eight miles away from the home town of Walden!"

Abner paused to catch his breath, apparently, after making this tremendous disclosure, tho it might be that he also wished to let the amazing fact sink into the minds of his auditors before continuing. Taking advantage of the interval, he went on swiftly with his recital.

"Most of you may know that the Canadian border line comes only a couple of miles away from the border up here. Many a time when the wind set in from the north could plainly hear signal whistles, and even the puffing of an engine drawing one of those heavy freight trains over the road.

"Well, it seems that there is a long and high trestle, as well as a bridge, over the river some point close to it. I went once with those gentlemen to get a picture of it, but we met a border guard who told us such a thing was impossible, and that any one caught on the Canadian side with a camera just then would be locked up. I reported to King and treated harshly, so we had to give the project up.

"All the same, now exactly where that trestle and bridge lie, and I even believe I could go there in the night-time without getting lost, I'm sure. Once I get my bearings and fix a place in my mind I never forget the same."

"Guess we all know that, Ab," Hi Henry interrupted.

"That bridge was what those two men were after, and they said that they intended the leader. "They must have visited the same more than once, for they seemed to know all about it. Pardner, I believe the big man worked on the trestle when it was being repaired, for he talked of having used his eyes and just as he was ordered to do by some one in authority across the water; and I guessed from that that he said that he might even mean an officer in the secret service of Germany."

Carl was heard to give vent to a little snort just then, tho it was impossible to understand whether this signified admiration or scepticism. The others all knew on which side Carl's sympathies lay, and they could easily understand how he would be anxious his ears now to catch every word Abner uttered. The matter was coming directly home to the State of Indiana in the cause of the Central Powers were doing all they could to prevent the exportation of large quantities of munitions that were strengthening the hands of Germany's bitter foes.

"Here, Abner, let me wade out after listening for a long time, and picking up a few words here and a whole sentence now and then, get the summing up the whole matter. These two desperate men have plotted to blow up the bridge at the river, and in this way hinder the shipment of troops or ammunition or army supplies from the coast to be sent abroad. It was tried once before in another place, you remember, by a German resident who was firmly believing he had nothing within his rights in trying to cripple the common enemy wherever found. But this is in the hands of Uncle Sam, who may look at the matter in quite another way; because no one has a right to commit a hostile act on our territory, or even conspire to do the same, against a country with which we are at peace, as we are with Great Britain."

"That isn't the worst, either," muttered Hi Henry.

"I'm sorry to say it isn't," Abner went on to say quickly. "These madmen haven't stopped at planning to destroy the bridge and trestle, but have an aim to blow the same up when a heavy train, loaded from end to end with stores and munitions of war, is passing over. Perhaps a million dollars' worth of goods will be sacrificed in the bargain, as well as a big gap made in the line, that it will take weeks and even months to repair."

That last shot actually staggered the listening Scouts. They could be heard drawing in their breath in a whistling sort of way like expressions of amazement and consternation. Then Oscar Summerlin, who chanced to recover a little sooner than any of the rest, went on to say in a horrified tone:

"Oh, my stars! What if some of those freight cars were loaded with scores of the monster projectiles and high explosive shells we've been reading about every day in the papers as being coming across the Atlantic Ocean? Say, that would be the limit, I should think. Why, it would send old Walden and ten miles away. I can imagine how people'd gather in the streets and try to figure out what happened, because the thunder at this time of year couldn't be thought of. Guess some of the timid ones would even say Zeppelins fresh must have escaped from Kiel Canal and come over to bombard Uncle Sam's coast, because he allowed his folks to make so much ammunition for the Allies."

"What do you think of those two men, Abner?" asked the practical Carl. "Are they really agents of the German government, or just cranks who want to strike a blow against England, like a few wild Irishmen I've read about keep boasting they mean to do the first chance they get."

"Really, I wouldn't like to say, Luke," replied the Scout leader. "From certain words they dropped we had an idea they were paid by men who had plenty of money to spend in such a way; but whether this gold came from the royal war chest in Germany or thru some secret society organized by men who simply hate England, neither of us can tell you. Nor does it matter much to us, who or what they are. All we have to know is that their scheme is a dastardly one, and that it involves not only great loss to the railroad, but may cost precious and innocent human lives—if they are allowed to carry it out."

Something significant about his last words caught the attention of Wee Willie.

"Abner," he quickly went on to say in a voice that trembled a little with both earnestness and excitement, "when you talk that way are you thinking about our being Scouts, and that it would sully our honor if we tried to tell ourselves that this would be none of our business, like this is, and for any Dutch friends we've had since already I've decided that since we have learned about the intended blow-

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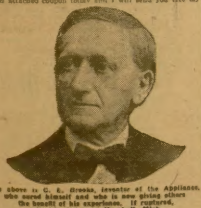
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St. No., P. O., or R. F. D. .....

ing up of the railroad bridge it's our bounden duty to do everything we can to prevent the thing from being carried out. Get that, everybody?"

CHAPTER VII.

SEVEN AGAINST ONE.

DOES that mean a vote whether to take up this big job or not, Abner?" asked the diminutive Scout, who, however, could always be counted on to "toe the mark" whenever a sudden need for recruits arose.

"I've already made up my mind to stick by Abner to the last gap," remarked Hi Henry, quickly, before the leader could say a word; and undoubtedly by doing this the tall Scout intended to influence any weak-kneed brother who might not be quite sure whether he felt like "sticking" or not.

"Count me in the game," said Oscar, promptly.

"No need of my saying I'm with you, Ab, heart and soul, for you know that without a word from me," Cliff remarked, slowly, but with a firmness that pleased the leader immensely.

"Add my name," came from the Porter boy.

"Guess I couldn't afford to be left out when there's a chance for some excitement like that, and a Hun action told them.

"Oh, I'm on!" sang out Wee Willie Winkie, with one of his customary squeaks.

Everybody had spoken now but Carl Fletts. The rest turned on him with something more than curiosity, for as has been said before, they well knew how the boy's heart beat in sympathy with the Central Powers in the frightful struggle that was going on across the sea, and that Carl honestly believed Germany was engaged in a war for the perpetuation of her nationality as a first-class power.

"I like not the idea of helping the enemy any more than across the water," Carl observed gravely. "It is not my business whether one of those trains it blow up because some wild fanatics they choose to play a sly trick on the Canucks. Why should I worry? I am a Lone Scout, and my country it is the glorious United States. I have no use for England, the sea robber that would starve my relatives over in the Black Forest. Let some of those smart Canadian Scouts discover what is going on over in their country. It is not my fault if somebody gets hurt when that train she goes up in pieces."

Abner knew that he would have a hard job convincing the stubborn Carl otherwise, but he was bound to do the same, and in the right way, too, by appealing to all that was manly and just in the other.

"Listen, Carl," he started in to say impressively, "up to half an hour ago it was none of our business whether this attempt succeeded or not. That was when we didn't dream there was such a black scheme hatched up. But now that you and I and the rest here do know about it, we become a party to the crime if we fail to do everything in our power to frustrate it. Suppose you hear the explosion, and we all wend over to see the remains of the bridge and train, when we'd came upon the mangled body of a poor engineer lying there."

Carl gave a gasp, for that was bringing it home to him with a vengeance, as it happened his own father was a locomotive engineer on a Vermont line, and these thoughts filled his horrified breast with dreadful suspense in the humble Bette home when some tempest raged, or a railroad strike endangered the lives of faithful employes.

"Carl, if we look down on that poor man we must believe that we, too, were accessories in causing his death, because we could have possibly prevented it if we acted right now. Don't forget that you come of Germon blood. Such a deed as this is not sublime patriotism, or a sacrifice to duty, but the work of cranks who care nothing about whose life they take if only they can make their point. Now, whether you go along or choose to remain here it makes little difference to us. We must do what we believe to be right."

That's right, Abner!" echod Hi Henry. "I'm with you there, every time."

Carl seemed to be reflecting deeply. He was set in his way, but fairly reasonable. He could see the justice of what Abner had just said to him must have sunk deeply into his heart. Perhaps the thought that a number of the doomed munitions train also had a strong effect on the boy.

"Well, how about you, Carl?" asked the leader, pleasantly, and with an insidious wheedling way about his manner of speech.

"I have decided," came the slow reply.

"Go, or stay?" demanded Hi Henry, who, not having the feeling for the Old Country that filled poor Carl's heart, could not understand why the latter should even hesitate a moment when his duty seemed so plain.

"I will accompany you all right, boys," Carl explained, "only I ask Abner, please do not force me to take a leading part, because I can see I must do all the time thinking of those poor German cousins of mine who are fighting in the trenches, and dodging the shells made in America."

Now Abner could understand just how Carl felt, and that bridge was going to be too glad to accommodate him in his modest request.

"I'll fix it so that you won't have to take any lead, Carl," he assured the other. "Then you will be doing your duty according to your own ideas, and at the same time not lifting a hand to aid the enemies of your people. We want to save that bridge, and every foot of the train that will be blown up with it than for any other reason, you understand."

"I am satisfied, Abner, and I thank you all the same," Carl went on to say; but from that moment a cloud settled on his head and muttered to himself it was very evident that he carried a heavy heart when setting out to thwart the designs of those who planned to strike a deadly blow at the shipment of stores abroad for the Allies.

After all, the victory had been won much sooner than Abner imagined would be the case. The boys were filled with the happy thought that had caused him to connect the contemplated explosion with Carl's life as the son of a railroad engineer. In picturing his own father in that locomotive cab, the boy found it utterly impossible to continue to believe that it was all none of his business. That brought it home to him for, as the old saying goes, "it matters considerably whose ox is gored.

"What comes next, Abner?" asked the impatient Wikkie boy.

"I suppose you'd like to start immediately for the Canadian side of the border," replied Abner, "but that strikes me we ought to learn a little more about the plans of these men before we strike out."

"Ditto here, Ab," came from Hi Henry, who expected that if another spying expedition were inaugurated he would not before be picked as the companion of the leader.

"It's true," added Abner, "that I've got with me a little rough sort of a map I made when up in this region before, and I believe I could find it; but I would lead you straight to where that bridge and trestle span the river bed. But there's something else we must consider, and that is the border guards who line the whole section, and I understand the plan has been doubled considerably since that other attempt to destroy an important railroad bridge was made. You remember it was pulled off by a reservist who couldn't get across to fight with his friends in the war trenches."

"You mean we might find it a hard tug to creep past some of those same guards along the border, don't you, Abner?" queried Cliff.

"They control about all the trails, and places where you could cross," the other explained. "It wouldn't be so very pleasant to have a gun suddenly stuck in the pit of your back, and some man tell you to throw up your hands or you would be shot to pieces.

"But if it comes to that, Abner," protested Lake, "why couldn't we tell them what object we had in trying to cross over?"

"We could do all that easy enough," Abner admitted, "provided they spoke first before doing any shooting; but there's a chance we might be at a loss, never pay the least attention to what we said. Of course, after the terrible feeling that would come over us and have to let us go free, but a whole lot of satisfaction that would be to us postmortem. We've got to do a little, we do it, and don't go beating around the bush."

"Correct every time, Abner, and just as you say, we ought to stop at nothing in our effort to save that bridge and the precious stores in its possession. It's understood, I hope, fellows?"

Some of the others may have felt a little doubtful about it, but there could be no opportunity for them to catch a glimpse of the pale set pretty-as-a-picture face likewise listen to what they were saying to each other. Long ago, however, they had learned the value of discipline in the ranks, and were accustomed to doing as they were ordered by the one in supreme command.

"If we mean to do it out here for a short while," said Ad Porter, "I'm going to make myself as comfy as I can, and advise the rest of you to follow suit."

With that he carefully placed his blanket on the cold ground and then dropped down upon it. The idea proved catching, for every one of the band of seven picked to stay behind hastened to do likewise. Boys can adapt themselves to conditions in an admirable manner, especially after they have been put thru the Scout mill, and they soon had all made themselves without depending on others.

"Ta-ta, boys!" said Hi Henry, patronizingly, as he crawled into the midst of the leader. "we'll look you up when we come back again. And remember not to stray from the camp, for there's no telling but you may lose your chance to go along across the border with us. Ready, Ab. If you are."

They glided away and left the six sitting there like a row of Turks or Arabs waiting for the call of the muezzin on the minaret to begin their devotions on their prayer rugs.

Time promised to hang heavily on their hands, those fellows realized, after the boys were gone, but the few restrictions had been placed upon their talking. If only they remembered to speak low, nobody knew how quickly they soon began to discuss the situation.

"Queer, isn't it," said the hope of the Wikkie family, "how things have taken a sudden spurt for us on this little jaunt. Seems like there might be a fatality connected with the trip. First there was that fire next door to the school building, at which we worked like troopers to help put it out, so that we had to be given a two weeks' holiday right in the tail end of November, something that never happened before. Then, after we'd made up our minds to spend the time up here close to the Canadian border, those two rascals have to set about plotting to blow up a bridge, and also a munitions train, and we get on to the game, so that we feel it's our solemn duty to give warning to the guards."

"Our time has come at last," remarked Ad. "Some of us began to think it never would strike our Tribe, when other Lone Scouts were given such fine chances to show what they were made of."

"Better late than never, boys," said Oscar, yawning as if sleepy.

"As for me," observed Carl, seriously, "I agree with some things that you say. Wee Willie, but not all. When you call these patriots rascals I object. I tell you they believe that it is right to do anything so long as they can start a crimp in that flow of ammunition that is going forward all the time from Canada and England, to mow down brave German soldiers who are risking their lives for the Fatherland."

"You may well say that, Sunday, Carl," the other told him, "and you never could convince me that it's the right thing for any person living under the Stars and Stripes to conspire to blow up factories, or powder works, or buildings where army stores and ammunition are being made over here, so long as international law allows of their manufacture and export."

"Yes," added Cliff, indignantly, "and just remember how crafty and mean it is to slip a bomb aboard some steamer that is loaded with horses, or oil, or something of the sort, so that the perfect right to export, so that the whole thing goes down in midocean, and not a single life is spared of all aboard the same."

"There never was such a cruel war," ventured Ad Porter, "from the time when the Jews fought the Philistines in the

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Promised Land, and little David used his sling to bring down the giant, Goliath. Why, the papers are cram full of frightful devices that are being employed to kill over there in Europe."

"My father says," ventured Oscar, who it may be remembered had a judge for his parent, "that all this is going to make another world war impossible. This one has turned out to be so horrible that humanity will never stand for that sort of thing."

"That depends on how it comes out," retorted Wee Willie Winkle. "If Germany wins, even Uncle Sam will have to grin and bite teeth, because the military spirit will be on top. But if the shoe is on the other foot, and the Allies force Germany to the wall, I hope the civilized world will come to its senses, and some arrangement be made to insure a lasting peace."

"Hum! Then take it from me your Uncle Sam ought to get this preparedness on right away, quick," jeered Carl; "because as sure as the sun rised tomorrow Germany will never be whipped!"

Of course these boys talked pretty muchs as they heard their fathers do around the supper table, after reading the news from across the sea; but at the same time they were having some of the lessons of the iniquity of war forced upon their inquiring minds by the fact that as Scouts they had been taught to think for themselves.

(Continued Next Week.)

The Quadroon's Hate.

(Continued From Page 7.)

the same stricken state as my sister, the from a different cause. Nothing could have saved her reason had I really and truly loved the man who pretended to wed me this night."

"Precious!" Mrs. Hastings gasped out the word and sat down again, weak and trembling.

"Yes, intended. For the master of Charleston Hall already has a wife and child. "This night have I seen the marriage certificate. I am not a revenged woman, except as it places me in a false position in the eyes of our acquaintances; Sophia, the quadroon, came to me the moment I reached the Hall and rescued me from its master, as she would have done my sister, had Ila wedded him instead of me."

Mrs. Hastings moaned as the revelation was made but her husband was not so easily convinced.

"Nepha, a quadroon, whom they have educated beyond her position, has shown you a document, and you believed her story," he said sarcastically. "Some spurious paper, forged somehow, she has palmed off on you for revenge on her master for a fancied wrong. She avowed her enmity, you say. It is a trumped-up story, plain enough. Don't believe it, Lois. I tell you Lloyd is a gentleman."

"You mean that he has polish, when it suits him to use it," Lois replied defiantly. She began to fear that after all it might turn out to be a mistake, and she would think Lloyd Charleston's wife; and the thought that she might be obliged to return to the mansion she had just deserted made her tremble. "I have had a glimpse behind the scenes, as it were. He laid aside his gentlemanly manners for a brief space while he sneered at and taunted me. Even if he is not a bigamist he is a scoundrel. He has revealed himself as such to me without shame or hesitancy. He taunted me with your deception in exchanging your daughters and giving him the one he did not want. He threatened me with personal violence, declared that the ceremony made me his plaything. Oh, it was hideous!

"Wait," as her father attempted to speak, "you do not know all. Ila's trouble lies at that man's door. She went to the Crossroads tonight to meet and flee with the lover of the colored girl forced into a hateful union. You heard the doctor say that she had received a terrible shock. You heard her babblings—that she was too late, that Cecil was dead. He was murdered while waiting for Ila to meet him where the main roads cross each other, and the master of Charleston, whom she jilted for another, is guilty of the crime. The blood of Cecil Lynd is upon his soul."

"Impossible, Lois!" interrupted her father. "You are talking wildly."

"It is true," affirmed the girl. "Do you know why I was frozen with horror at the very altar, when he lifted the veil to kiss me? Do you know why I came near making a scene? I could not have done it a minute before. Then I felt such revulsion of feeling when I realized the hope of my heart in becoming the bride of the man who had won my girlish love—why I shrank from the one I had been willing to marry. Now I know it was because I felt, even instinctively, not from a husband, but from a bigamist and murderer. The proof of his crime was there. I saw it—a spot so small that it had not been noticed before. Now a spot of blood—the blood of Cecil Lynd!"

Her voice rose to a pitch near the hysterical point, but Mrs. Hastings here convicted him," she added. "He said that Ila could hardly be married to Cecil unless she was dead. Oh, it was horrible."

The last sentence and her earnestness in denouncing Lloyd, whom he knew she had loved, impressed Mr. Hastings once, convinced Mr. Hastings that the matter would bear investigation. He spoke in a voice made calm by sheer force of will:

"I will look into this thing. I have vowed to defend Ila's honor, and to save Ila's bestride if he be among the living. If it is true that he has been murdered, I will move heaven and earth to bring him to justice. For it is because of his disappearance that my daughter lies at the point of death. Whatever may be wreaked on the one responsible for the fate that has overtaken her, be it Lloyd Charleston or another."

The dawn was breaking, and none of the trio had had a moment's sleep or rest, but Mrs. Hastings refused to retire while he made preparations for an immediate trip to the city. At that hour there was a knock at the door and a servant entered, still wearing the livery of the night before. He bore a visiting card, which Lois read, sending to the master of the house. He took up the card and read the name aloud: "Mr. Abner Walters." It is a writing beneath it, asking an interview.

Lois' face grew rosy as she heard that name for the first time since they had turn from the West a year before, and her father seemed to take notice of it. Avon Walters was a partner of Cecil Lynd, joint owner and foreman of the 10-Section ranch.

Mr. Hastings turned to the servant who awaited an answer. "Tell Mr. Walters I will be with him immediately," he said. Then to the women he added: "I may be able to learn something concerning Cecil from his partner. Do not wait for me."

He went out and down the stairs to the reception room where the man from the West awaited an interview.

This mysterious story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will not regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

Masterful Morgan.

(Continued From Page 15.)

out of the worst of this tangle of mountains. I would go with the boat's calculated for only two, and George W. can handle it like a magician. He will do it for you. Now, Walla you, by Jupiter, we are yours to command."

The speaker was now full of energy, alert, thoughtful, and resourceful, and he so impressed Morgan that questions followed. It seemed impossible to use a boat in floods, but the fact that the suggestion was not to be turned down lightly.

Fillmore explained that he had a craft of his own make in which the negro always went when outside supplies were needed, that there was a channel, if skillful, and that Bottle Gulch, owing to its surroundings, was never much affected by rains, and was the best bet.

"Wait until morning and you shall see for yourself," he added. "Once more I say that I don't care a rap for those ballots you carry, for they are only the votes of ignorant men, but duty—well, sir, you are going thru."

That night Morgan slept long and soundly in the hospitable cabin, and a plentiful breakfast followed in the morning. Then he was conducted to see the boat and Bottle Gulch. He found water running high there, but it was not turbulent, and both his companions assured him there would be no trouble for the whole fifteen miles below.

The boat, on inspection, satisfied the sheriff, and as he had no other way of advancing except on foot, he decided to risk the offered course. Half an hour later a supply of food, a blanket roll, a part of which he strapped to his own person, he said good-by to Fillmore and entered the boat.

One catch of the water and the hazardous trial was begun. George W. promptly justified his master's faith and used the single oar so well that the little craft ran rapidly without shipping water. Morgan became hopeful, but hardly confident.

Altho there was no flood to deal with, the current was swift, and the boat raced in a way that would have worried even heavier craft, but the negro, cheerful, unafraid, and alert, guided it so well that the first miles were passed without mishap. Morgan became more hopeful, tho he was out of his element in a boat, and this one was peculiar.

"You handle that oar well," he finally commented.

"I ought to, sah," George W. replied. "I've boated on many waters, and I'm a regular water-rat."

"Very skilful, you are, and we're making great progress. Are certain there will be no turbulent stream farther on?"

"Sure thing, sah. This gulch is walled in with cliffs right away from here on it, so funny are they shaped. Down farther them cliffs end and there is bare ground, but we're aboard of the Rocky Mountains tipping over?"

"Bare ground! What do you mean?"

"Why, sloping banks of earth instead of cliffs."

"Fillmore told me the cliffs held all the way."

"He never was down here, himself, so he probably forgot."

Morgan studied the news with some uneasiness. In various places before reaching the cabin he had seen where recent landslides had occurred, and the relentless nature of them made him wish himself out of the gulch and gulch. What if the earth down a gulch was treacherous? What if it plunged into the gulch while they were passing?

Three miles more were run off swiftly, and George W. suddenly laughed gleefully.

"Ain't we making time, tho?" he demanded. g. "A thousand miles an hour, sure, and the ripples in my ha'r make ears powerfully. Just ahead is a little bend, but I'll swing around it neatly, which the cabin."

The boat flashed on, neared the bend, navigated it well, and then a new stretch of gulch was before them. The navigators looked, and nobody laughed then. On one side was evidence of a recent landslide, and it had emptied a second flood-stream into the first, bringing with it sticks, trees and other things, so that the former way was a field of tossing obstacles, whirled here and there

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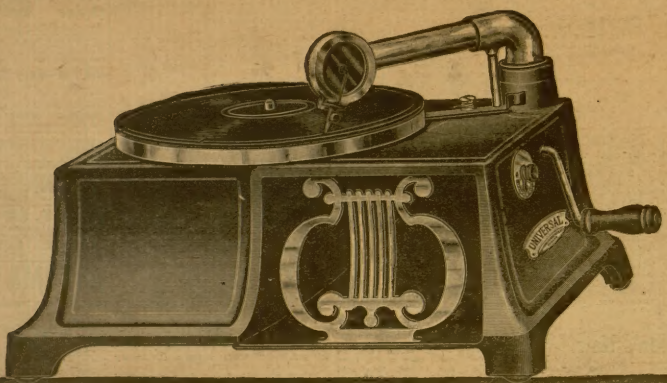

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